

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JULY 1928.

THE 'LIVELY PEGGY.'

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE Rector's study looked upon the walled lawn and was lighted by a heavily mullioned window. Day faded early in it, and Wyke, passing from the lamp-lit room into the open spaces of the churchyard, was surprised to find the twilight still lingering, and the sky, cleared by the north wind, shining blue above the church tower—a blue that faded to green where it met the sea. He owned the pensive influence of the evening hour, but the uppermost feeling in his mind was not so much depression as anxiety. He dreaded the ordeal before him. He felt the weight of his responsibility—he measured with alarm the cost of failure. He foresaw that he must meet the young wife, and that if by a slip or any mishap he betrayed his knowledge it was impossible to say what the issue might be. The Rector's despair, surprising in a man so cold and self-contained, had infected him; and as he crossed the churchyard he shivered, picturing Peggy's stricken face should his bearing or a chance word betray the truth.

But it had to be done! More than once he told himself that as he left the churchyard behind him. At all costs the thing must be kept from Peggy until her child was born; with that end in view no means seemed to him to be unwarranted, no precaution excessive. And while he trembled with one half of his mind at the prospect before him, with the other half he sought for a plausible pretext on which he might get Charlotte Bicester alone.

With the Cottage in sight he hit on one, and it was with a little more confidence that he opened the wicket. He saw that an upstairs window was lighted, and he rapped softly, hoping that Charlotte might be alone and below. He heard an exclamation, he caught the sound of a chair as it was moved back, the door opened. It was Charlotte—to his great relief.

'Sir Albery!' she exclaimed. Then over her shoulder, 'It's Sir Albery, dear,' she said.

That put an end to his hope, but not to his plan. 'Is Mrs. Bligh there?' he asked, his tone as careless as he could make it.

'She wouldn't be anywhere else at this hour!' Charlotte said, surprised.

'Can you leave her for a minute?' He spoke loud enough to be heard within. 'I'm afraid you are in trouble, do you know. I'm very sorry, but your mother is here.'

'My mother? Oh dear!'

'Yes, and, I am afraid, on the war-path. She is in the carriage in the churchyard. It is a question of some dinner-party, and to tell you the truth, I am afraid that she's in a tantrum, Miss Bicester. I fear that she won't go till she sees you.'

'Well, I can't come,' Charlotte replied. She was completely deceived. 'And you must tell her so.'

His eyes strove to convey a warning. He could see that the tea-table was set, but the open door concealed Peggy from him. 'I am afraid you must come,' he said with a laugh.

'Of course you must, Charlotte,' Peggy cried. He heard her rise, and he trembled. She came to the door, and stood behind Charlotte. 'Of course she'll come, Sir Albery. Does she think that I can't be left for a minute?'

'I came for her very unwillingly,' he said.

'There's no news, I suppose?' Peggy's eyes were wistful.

'No,' he said cheerfully—and the more cheerfully as he was shocked by the change that suspense had wrought in her within the last few days. Her face was drawn and haggard, and fatigue had set black prints under her eyes. 'I don't expect it, Mrs. Bligh, as long as the wind stays where it is. A change, and in forty-eight hours I shall hope to hear that they are in.'

She looked at him pitifully. 'I must be patient,' she said, but her words seemed to come from the depths of an overcharged heart. 'I so much hoped that he would beat home before—'

'And so he will, my dear,' Charlotte said lightly. 'And uncommonly he will be in the way too—as my lady mother is now.'

'Pon honour, you must not keep her waiting,' Wyke urged, playing his part. 'She is not in the best of tempers, Miss Bicester, to tell you the truth. I fear you must come. You can be back in ten minutes, if she is not too much for you.'

The undutiful daughter turned away. 'I am not afraid of that,' she said. 'Wait till I get my hat.'

'Put on something, dear,' Peggy murmured.

'My dear, I shall not stay long enough to want it.'

'But if she really needs you?'

'She won't get me!' Charlotte retorted. 'Mothers must not cry for the moon, Sir Albery! And my mother is just as likely to get me as the moon!'

'But, Charlotte—'

'Do you sit down in your chair, my dear! And this moment if you please, or I don't go at all. I don't go a yard until I see you in your chair again!'

She was putting on her hat while she talked. 'Now, Sir Albery,' she said, 'I'm ready to face the dragon and all her works! I expect it is Augusta who has put her up to it. Now, don't you stir a foot until I come back, Peggy, or I'll scold you worse than my mother scolds me!'

She nodded gaily and joined Sir Albery outside. He closed the door and they passed through the gate and up the path, the sea, pale under the fading light, lying below them on their right. She turned her eyes on him. 'Is my mother really there?'

'No, but we must go a little farther before we speak. No, she is not there, but there is bad news—very bad!—and I had to have a word with you. The Rector thought that you should hear it that you may be more on your guard.'

Charlotte clapped her hands. 'Bad news?' she cried. 'Oh dear, dear! Oh dear, dear!' she wailed. 'It will kill her! It will kill her if she hears it!'

'She must not hear it,' Wyke replied, and he told her in a few words what was known. Charlotte listened, and did not interrupt him, but Wyke saw that her face was very grave. 'Oh dear!' she said when he had finished. 'I would give a hand that this had not happened! Oh, it is cruel! Cruel! Now of all times! It will kill her, Sir Albery! She will never get through her trouble with this—with this!' There were tears in her eyes.

'She must not know it,' Wyke said, as they emerged from the path and turned mechanically towards the walk that looked down on the sea. 'She must not know it,' he repeated firmly. 'You must be on the watch night and day to keep it from her. You must fence her in. The Rector will see the doctor and nurse, and prepare them. And no one will be in a hurry to tell her. The danger, the

only danger, I think, is that someone, who takes it for granted that she knows, may get word with her. And surely you can guard against that ?'

'I don't know ! I don't know !' Charlotte cried. 'And how long—how long can we keep it from her ?'

'Long enough, I hope,' he said. 'And after all it is not a certainty that Bligh is lost. He may have shifted to the prize ; or he may be one of the three who have been saved.'

'Three !' Charlotte exclaimed in a tone of despair. 'No, I've no hope. I know from her what he is, and he would not spare himself ? If she knows what we know she'll have no hope.'

'Still there is a chance. And the child once born, she will cling to it and live.'

Charlotte broke down altogether. 'Poor Peggy !' she sobbed. 'Poor, poor Peggy ! And she gave up everything for him ! Oh, it is too hard ! It is too hard ! And—I am afraid ! How shall I face her ?'

'It's a dreadful thing to put on you !' he said, and his tone said more than his words. The ordeal that had seemed to him so formidable this girl must endure hour after hour, and it might be for days. 'I cannot think how you will bear it,' he continued with feeling. 'I would give the world to help you, but I cannot.'

She dabbed her eyes. 'I must bear it,' she said. 'I should be a poor creature to call myself her friend and—fail her now.'

Sir Albery took a step forward. 'A poor creature !' he exclaimed. 'I think you are——' and then the clock in the old tower above them tolled the first solemn stroke of six, and Charlotte took fright and cut him short. 'Heavens !' she cried ; 'I must get back ! We've been out twenty minutes. Don't speak, don't speak another word ! I must think what I will say to her.'

He saw the need of haste, and he turned with her. They hurried back down the steep steps and along the path. Her mind was full of the trial before her, and he respected her silence. Neither spoke until they reached the wicket. There he wrung the girl's hand. 'God bless you,' he said earnestly. 'I would do it for you, my dear, if I could.'

'But you can't !' Charlotte retorted. She dried her eyes with care. 'But, never mind, I am a good liar, and I must do my best !'

He saw her enter, he knew that he could do no more, and, anxious as he was, he thought of his uneaten dinner, and he retraced his steps. Near the foot of the church tower he came upon the

sexton who was locking up the church. The man touched his hat—it was light enough for them to recognise one another—and after a momentary hesitation the man joined him. ‘Be this news true, your honour?’ he asked in a low voice. ‘It be woeful tidings if it be.’

Sir Alberty was startled; he was more than startled—he was dismayed. How had the news got about? He had taken for granted that the Rector would keep it to himself as long as he could—till the morrow at earliest; and he was surprised that he had not. ‘What news?’ he asked warily. ‘What news do you mean, Trewithen?’

‘Well, ’twas the Captain that told me!’ the man replied, turning his hat in his hands. ‘Leastways he let a word or two fall, your honour, and ’twas easy to guess the rest. But he wasn’t just what you’d call himself. He had had a drop, saving your presence, but, Lord’s sakes, not as much as I’ve often——’

‘Do you mean Captain Bligh?’

‘To be sure, sir, the old gentleman. He went by me not ten minutes ago, or it might be a quarter at most.’

‘He had been drinking?’ Wyke stopped short—the two had walked a score of paces together. ‘Are you sure, man?’

Challenged, Trewithen, it was clear, felt himself in something of a hobble, and he hastened to clear himself. ‘I’d be loth to say it, if it wasn’t so, sir,’ he said. ‘’Deed I would! He’s a kep off so long it’s been an admiration! But a bit o’ bad news—and bad it be and no mistaking if it be true—well, there’s nothing like it for sending a man to his comforts.’

Wyke stared at him. ‘What did he tell you?’ he asked.

‘As the Frenchies had took and sunk ’em to the last man a’most! Terrible bad it was, he said, and his son killed on the quarter-deck! And him a wretched childless old man! And the sooner he was——’

A certain fear gripped Wyke. He seized the sexton by the shoulder and turned him about. ‘Which way did he go?’ he cried. ‘Which way, man?’

‘Way?’ Trewithen, surprised, pointed in the direction from which Wyke had come. ‘Down to Israel Bean’s he was going, your honour, to be sure. He bides there in the Cove till the young lady’s trouble be over. Dear life, ’twill be sad news for her, if it be true!’

Wyke heaved a sigh of relief. He had had a moment of great fear. ‘Well, I’ve heard something of it, Trewithen,’ he said, collecting himself. ‘Whether it’s true, I can’t say, and we’ll hope

it is not. It is sure to be exaggerated. But, true or false, don't put it about, man, till we hear more. D'you hear? And keep a still tongue about the Captain. It's a sad time for him, and I'm not surprised.'

The sexton agreed that the Captain's backsliding was natural, and he promised to be silent, and Wyke, parting from him, turned into the Rectory. He found the Rector in the study, seated as he had left him, and he made his report. He thought it wise to say nothing of the Captain's lapse. It was useless to set the other against him, and it might well be that by morning the old man would have slept off his drink, and no more would be heard of it. Instead, when he had finished his tale, 'I think that is all we can do, Rector,' he said. 'We have made all as safe as we can.' And then, remembering that the news was known and would probably spread, 'There's one man I think we ought to tell,' he said. 'Or he may hear it elsewhere and make trouble.'

The Rector had not risen. He sat with his shoulder towards the door, and grateful as he was to the other, and though in very truth he was telling himself that Wyke was such a friend as few had, it was much if he had once glanced at him. He did not turn now, and his tone was dry as he asked 'Who? Who is it we ought to tell? Surely the fewer who know this the better.'

'Well, I thought, Budgen.'

The exclamation that burst from the other's lips was so violent that it drove Wyke a step back. The Rector rose to his feet and his manner was as wild as his words. 'Don't name that man to me,' he said, 'lest I curse him! He is the murderer of my child! He is the murderer of—who shall say? Who shall say? Keep him—keep him from my sight! Or the curse of—'

He broke off. He passed his trembling hand across his brow, and as Wyke, really fearing that the news had turned his brain, stared at him, he came back to himself. He sank into his chair and covered his face. 'God forgive me!' he said in a voice that strangely troubled the other. 'God forgive us all! I think I am going mad!'

Wyke put his friendly hand on his shoulder. 'You must not take it like this,' he said. 'You take it too hardly, Rector. We must think of others, and——'

'Others?' The Rector groaned. 'Am I not thinking of them—thinking of them always? Thinking of them now! Wyke, I am an unhappy man.'

'Come, come,' Wyke replied, the need to bring the other to a saner mind overcoming his reserve. 'This must not be, my friend. The news has been too much for you, and I don't wonder. But you must not give way. We must make the best of a bad job and hope that the loss has been exaggerated. Most likely it has. Bligh may not be lost. If in the *Peggy*, he may be one of the survivors, or he may have shifted to the prize. It is quite likely.'

The Rector with his face hidden made a sign of dissent. He muttered something in a low voice, but all that Wyke could catch were the words 'the sins of the fathers,' and something about a Nemesis—it sounded like that, but he could not piece the fragments.

Still he was relieved to see that the man's passion was spent, and 'You must cheer up,' he repeated earnestly, 'and not give up hope. I must go now—we have done all that we can to make things safe. I am sure that we can depend on Miss Bicester; she is one in a thousand. But I will ride in early in the morning. I may be of use with some of the poor souls in the town, and anything I can do—but, for God's sake, take comfort, my friend.'

The Rector put out a hand, and Wyke pressed it and left him. But as he mounted his horse, and still more as he rode down the winding road from the headland to the town, the sense of tragedy, of something worse than he knew, weighed on him. He considered, at any rate until lately he had considered, the Rector to be a just man, but hard, cold, and something selfish. How great, then, must be the suffering that had moved such a man, and wrung from him that bitter cry! To be sure, the disaster was great, and it was natural that they who were responsible for it, who had risked men's lives for their own gain, should be shocked by the outcome. But, after all, these ventures were common. No man condemned them. Out of the greater ports, out of Bristol and Liverpool, letters of marque sailed by the score; to raid the enemy's trade was held to be a patriotic as well as a legitimate business; and if ship or men were lost it was but one of the reckoned perils of the war. Wyke weighed this, and wondered the more. Certainly, on his daughter's account the man might—and it was natural that he should—take the matter to heart; but the extent to which he felt it, the sharp cry that it had wrung from him, these perplexed Wyke as much as they oppressed him.

His mood was not lightened by a thing that befell him as he rode up the dark narrow street, his horse's hoofs rattling noisily on the stones. He had passed Dunch's pole, when a woman, a shawl about

her head, came out of a doorway and seized his rein. 'For God's sake,' she cried, looking up at him, 'tell me if it be true! For mercy's sake, sir, and you be held a good man to the poor, put us out of our misery and tell us!'

'It's Jael Cruddas, isn't it?' he said. He knew every creature in the place, and he only put the question to gain time.

'Ay, ay, sir!' the woman replied. 'And my man be aboard! Only tell us, sir! Tell us! My George be there, and we parted cross and wi' hard words—I would na' have him go! And we'll never make it up now! Never! Never!' she cried wildly. 'Oh, sir, as you be a kind man, tell me, is there a chance?'

'I think there is, Jael!' he said earnestly. 'For some at least. Some we know are saved. But how many I don't know, and no one does know yet! But some are saved for certain, and your George may be one. Half, and God grant it may be more—half may come back, I hope.'

She peered into his face, trying to read it by the light that shone from a neighbouring doorway. 'God bless you for that word!' she sobbed. 'You do mean it, sir? You are not deceiving me?'

'I do mean it,' Wyke said gravely. 'I've told you all I know myself. And the moment I know more I will come and tell you. It's a sad business, but we must keep up our hearts.'

'And the poor young lady?' the woman asked, speaking more quietly, but with a sob in her voice. 'Is it true that her man's killed, sir? They be saying that.'

'We don't know,' Wyke answered sorrowfully. 'But I am afraid his chance would not be of the best.'

'God help her, then! Does she know, sir?'

'Not yet. And she must not know.'

'No, sir, no! It'd be a hard heart that'd tell her.'

'You may be sure, Jael,' Wyke said, 'that you will not be forgotten. We are all one in this.' He rode on.

But his heart was heavy. He had forgotten his half-eaten dinner. His mind was full of the sorrow that on either hand wept behind closed doors, on cold hearths. And his house when he reached it seemed to him empty and desolate. He sat down to his meal, feeling the lack of a face to welcome him, of a word to greet him, of someone to whom he could tell his tale, who would listen and answer and comfort him. The table looked long and bare and cold; the silence of the house depressed him as it had never depressed him before. He told himself that the disaster had shaken

him ; that he sorrowed for the young wife, and her loss, for Jael and the rest. But presently he fell into another and a more cheerful train of thought—in which the Cottage and its inmates, or one of them, had still a share.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN Wyke's attitude to those about him there survived much of the feudal spirit. He looked on them as his people, and while he would have been shocked if the man on the road had not touched his hat when he passed, or the woman he met failed to curtsy, he owned on the other hand their claim to his support at a pinch and their right to find in him a sharer in their troubles. He did not flatter himself that his presence brought much comfort to a cold hearth, or cheer to a widowed home. But he knew that a word of sympathy from his mouth, and where it was needed a promise of help, would lighten the sense of abandonment, and though the morrow's task promised to be sad enough, it was a duty that he had no intention of evading. He had business on a distant farm in the forenoon, but that settled—and not without some sharp words about a fence—he turned his horse's head towards the town.

As he approached the Grange his mind strayed from his immediate business. He recalled the morning, now nearly a year past, when Charlotte Bicester had stopped him at the white gate and broken to him the news of Peggy's elopement. The scene rose clear before him, the sunshine, the freshness of the morning, the waiting girl, the dull shock deadening all his faculties. Perhaps it was the more vivid as on this day too the sun shone, and when he turned his eyes on the gate at the Grange he perceived a figure leaning on it, precisely as Charlotte had leant that morning. But this time it was not Charlotte. She, he knew, was at the Cottage. It was her mother. As, perforce, he slackened his pace to greet her ; she opened the gate and came out to him, and he noticed that the good lady looked unlike herself. Her face was flushed, her toupet was disordered, and knowing her, he prepared himself for a scolding. He was going to hear more about her daughter's obstinacy and undutifulness. But he found that he was mistaken. ' This is sad news,' she said, looking up at him, and he was astonished to see that her eyes were moist. ' I suppose you have heard it ? You are going there, no doubt ? '

' Yes,' he said, relieved. ' I was at the Rectory yesterday, and I

heard it there, late in the afternoon. I'm afraid that it is sad news for a good many.'

'Oh, but——' She looked hard at him and hesitated. 'But it wasn't known in the afternoon, was it? It could not have been. Or I haven't got it right. I understood that it didn't happen till the evening, or indeed this morning. My cook told me——'

'I think the Rector kept it to himself,' he explained. 'For a time, you know. He did not wish to spread it abroad, Lady Bicester, until it was confirmed. It may not be true, you know. We must hope that it is not true.'

The good woman stared. 'But—but there's some mistake!' she said. 'I'm afraid you haven't heard. Mrs. Bligh——'

He did not need to be told more! He knew the rest, and yet he had to be certain. 'What—what of her?' he said. 'What do you mean? Tell me, Lady Bicester, please!'

'Then you haven't heard. Oh dear, dear, I am afraid it will be a shock to you. It's bad news, very bad. The old Captain told her what was in the paper—that old man, you know! He wasn't himself, and did not know what he was doing. And her baby was born dead, at three this morning. And she's dying, I am told! They've no hope, they tell me.' And her ladyship broke down and actually shed vulgar tears. 'Oh, dear, dear, it's sad!' she said. 'I declare it's upset me as never was.'

Wyke did not speak for a long minute. Lady Bicester, recounting it afterwards to her cook, said that he took it very oddly. At last, 'At what time did you say it happened?' he asked in a dull tone. 'What time did he tell her?'

'About six, I hear. Charlotte, silly girl, had stepped out for something, and he came in fuddled with drink. And whether he just blurted it out, which I can't believe, or being in that state couldn't hide it, I am sure I can't say. But so it was—drat him! I declare I am glad now that Charlotte went to her and stopped, though it provoked me at the time, and little use it has been! I've sent a man in to get news, but if you will stop as you come out, it will be a kindness to me. I am that upset about the poor girl I can't say!'

'I will,' he said. 'I'll go on now.'

He gave his horse the rein, but his heart was very heavy. So this was the end of all their care and all their forethought—of their plans and their precautions, of Charlotte's devotion and unselfishness. To die so young and fair, and pass away, life hardly tasted! To lie,

another green mound in the churchyard, and presently, quickly to be forgotten! While the sun shone and the meadows bloomed and the lambs frisked, and the seasons moved in their eternal pitiless round! He had great powers of self-control, but the tears rose to his eyes as he pictured her. How gaily she had taken her troubles, how unselfishly faced the narrow home, the hardship and discomfort! How bravely confronted, alone as she was, the ordeal before her! How loyal had she been through all to the lot she had chosen, how loving, how uncomplaining! And this was the end.

He stabled his horse, and with his hat drawn over his eyes he made his way over the headland. Some hundred yards short of the Cottage he met the doctor climbing up the steps, and he stopped him. 'Is there any hope?' he said.

'None, I fear,' the other replied, his face worried and downcast. 'The news killed her as surely as if the old man had taken a pistol and shot her.'

'It was that?'

'Nothing else, God forgive him. Nothing else at all. She was going on well; famously, considering everything. It's a sad business.' The man was moved out of his professional calm. He added viciously that the Captain ought to be shot.

'And after all—the news may not be true,' Wyke said. 'He may not be dead.'

'The Lieutenant? No, I suppose not. I suppose there's a chance, though a small one. But it won't help her now.' He shrugged his shoulders. 'I can do no more.'

'She is sinking?'

'Fast, I am afraid.'

'And there is nothing to be done?'

'Nothing, sir—in my experience. Nothing if you had all the faculty here. Unless,' he added drily, 'you can bring her husband back within the next twenty-four hours. The truth is, she has no desire to live. And that's the very deuce in these cases.'

Sir Albery nodded. But when the doctor had passed on, he halted. He turned about as if he were minded to call him back. Then he thought better of it, and after standing a minute, lost in gloomy reflection, he went on. Near the Cottage he saw a group of two or three women staring at it in pity or in curiosity, or it might be in morbid interest. But he went by them without speaking, opened the wicket, and knocked softly at the door.

It opened without sound, and he stepped in. Two women were

busy about something on the hearth. They turned to look at him, the nearer of the two still holding a kettle in her hand. The room betrayed in its every part the signs of disaster that in sudden calamity so quickly accumulate. The table was littered with pots and plates, a horse hung with linen flanked the hearth, a woman's bonnet hung on a corner of it, a warming-pan, hastily set down, leant against a wall. The woman who had opened to him made a sign to him to make no noise.

'Who is with her?' he asked in a whisper.

'Mrs. Ovens, the nurse, sir, and Miss Bicester—God bless her, she've never left her. The Rector's been and gone—been twice he has, but he couldn't bear it, poor gentleman. I never thought to see him take on the like,' the woman added, with meaning. 'And Miss Portnal—she were with him. She took him home. They could do nothing, poor folk, no more than we.'

'Can you get Miss Bicester down for a minute?' The woman hesitated, but 'Tell her I am here,' he urged. 'I must see her.'

She gave way. She stepped to the door of the staircase and creaked her way up. In the silence he heard Charlotte move across the floor, he heard her begin to descend. She appeared at the foot of the stairs, her face pale but composed. Silently he made a sign to her to go before him; he opened the door for her and followed her out. When they had passed through the wicket, he took her hand. 'Is there no hope?' he asked.

'None, I fear,' she murmured. 'She is weak, oh, so weak!'

And then with an appealing look at him, 'Don't upset me!' she said.

'No! No!' he muttered, releasing her hand. 'God bless you Charlotte!' And with that he was silent a moment, mastering his feelings. Then 'Can she read?' he asked.

Charlotte winced. It was so incongruous a question to ask, and it was put so abruptly that it was no wonder that it startled her. 'Read?' she exclaimed. 'Oh, no, no! You don't understand—how weak she is!' Her voice expressed something of the woman's contempt for the man, astray and out of his province. 'She lies with her eyes shut and—and breathes, that is all.' She had to swallow down the sob that threatened her self-control. Read? Heavens! if he could see her!

'But she can understand? She can understand—what you say?'

'It is much if she does. I don't know. Sometimes, I think—with an effort.'

'Is there a paper in the house? A newspaper?'

Charlotte looked at him in grieved surprise. What had taken him, sober and sensible as he usually was! As well might he ask at such a moment if there was a chess-board or a hammer in the house! 'What do you mean?' she ejaculated. 'A paper?'

'But is there one? A newspaper?'

'I dare say. Yes, there is, I know. But—but what about it?' She stared at him.

'Can you get it? Can you get it for me?'

'Why?' she objected. Had the shock been too much for him? She could not otherwise explain a request so ill-timed.

'Never mind why!' he retorted with an impatience equal to her own. 'Get it for me. For God's sake,' he added, seeing that she hesitated, and was going to speak, 'don't waste time. I am going up to her. I am going to see her.'

'You?'

'Yes, I! Why not? Oh, for Heaven's sake, let us have no conventions now!' he cried. 'I want to try something. They say that there is no hope; then I can do no harm. I shall not make matters worse. But I must see her. Get me the newspaper,' he repeated insistently, 'and take me up to her before it is too late. It is a forlorn hope, I know, I know it is, but it is a hope.'

She caught a glimmering of his purpose, and as she met his eyes the glimmer grew brighter. She stared at him with parted lips. 'You—you really mean?' she breathed. 'You dare?'

He nodded. 'Let me have the newspaper,' he said, his face set hard. 'And leave the rest to me. On my head be it. If we can gain a day, or two or three days, who can say what the end may be? But we must be quick! We must be quick!'

She looked at him with dilated eyes, and in that look—but his thoughts were elsewhere—she let much of her feelings appear. 'Oh!' she said, 'who would have thought of it but you? Who would have—but come! Come, then.'

She went back into the house, and he followed. The women, looking over their shoulders, watched them curiously, their wonder aroused. Charlotte opened a drawer, took from it an old journal. She handed it to him. At the foot of the stairs, the women still gazing at them, but now in amazement, Charlotte paused. 'Have you thought what you will say?' she whispered, her eyes troubled.

He nodded. She signed to him to step softly, and she went up the narrow stairs before him. She opened a door. The lintel was

so low that he had to bend his head to enter the room. He raised his eyes and the first thing that met his gaze was one that he had not taken into his calculations. On a low box, in a corner where the sloping roof was lowest, cowered the old Captain. The unhappy man was rocking himself to and fro, his face in his hands, and at the sight of his dumb agony, and still more at the thought of what the wretched father's feelings must be, Wyke's heart, that had been hard against him, melted in pity. But then, and before indeed the change had well made itself felt, Wyke forgot the old man and all things beside save the still white face that lay upon the pillow, already, as it seemed to him, lifeless—so solemn and yet so wondrously fair and young it looked. Peggy's hair had been gathered into two thick coils that strayed one on each side of her head, and one hand, as white as her face, lay nerveless on the coverlet. Her eyes were closed. Wyke could not see that she breathed.

At that sight, so far exceeding that for which he had prepared himself, the courage that had been strong below, failed him. He stood, not venturing to approach. To break in upon that white tranquillity, that silent presence, that even now seemed to be not of this world, that had nothing any longer to hope or fear, and upon which death had already set its stamp—it seemed a sacrilege, an act beyond his power, profane, unfitting. To lie to her! To deceive her, who had already passed into the palace of truth! To play in this still chamber the gross drama that he had conceived! He felt too late that he could not, that he had not the heart to do it, nor the strength. The man stood shaken, dismayed, dumb.

It was the woman who at the critical moment stood firm. She passed by him to the bedside. 'Peggy,' she said, her voice low but clear. 'There is good news, dear. Do you hear, dear? Sir Albery is here, and he brings news, good news.'

He hesitated, still owning the ordeal to be too great for him. But Charlotte looked at him reproachfully and he went forward. He knelt beside the bed to bring his mouth nearer to Peggy's ear—but was it not also the fitting posture? 'Mrs. Bligh,' he said huskily. 'There is news.' Then drawing courage from desperation he raised his voice, and in a fuller tone, 'Do you hear, Mrs. Bligh?' he continued. 'Do you hear me? There is news, and it is good, good news. The best of news! Your husband is wounded and a prisoner, but he is alive—alive and safe! I bring the news. Do you hear me? He is alive!'

Peggy's eyelids quivered, as a butterfly's wings quiver invisibly

in the sunshine. Her eyes opened, and met his eyes. The coverlet moved above her breast.

'Again! Again!' Charlotte muttered, and in the agony of excitement mingled with hope she clutched Wyke's shoulder and he felt her fingers digging into his flesh. The nurse on the farther side of the bed had risen to her feet, and was looking on with startled eyes.

The perspiration stood on Wyke's brow, but he had gone too far to retreat. It seemed to him that he was wrestling for this life. 'Do you understand?' he cried. 'Good news has come! Your husband is alive, Mrs. Bligh! Your husband is alive, alive! The news is here—here in the newspaper! It is in the newspaper!' he repeated, striving desperately to reach the consciousness that seemed to be so distant, so ready to take its leave. He doubted if she heard or, hearing, understood, but 'He is safe! He is alive!' he repeated insistently. 'He will be here! You must live! You must live for him! He is coming home and he will be here!' The cry came from him again and again, 'He is alive!' For now he fancied that he saw in her tired eyes a spark of returning life, an awakening.

'He is alive! He will be here!' He repeated it in a very agony of earnestness. If he could only reach her! If he could only reach her, reach through to her on that strange borderland where she lay between life and death. 'You must live!'

She was breathing more quickly; yes, for certain she was breathing more quickly. He saw the nurse on the other side of the bed stoop and look closely at her. He saw the coverlet move and stir above her breast—or was he dizzy with excitement, and let his fancy deceive him? Yes, her hand moved, weakly, but as if she had the will to raise it. Her eyes dwelt solemnly on him, and suddenly there flashed into them a gleam of consciousness, of joy. Her lips parted, and though no one caught the word that they failed to frame, they knew that it was 'Alive!'

'Yes, alive, alive, indeed!' he swore. 'And coming home! It is here, here, in the paper! It is in the paper here!' He held it up for her to see. He tapped it again and again, the sheet rustling in his unsteady hand.

Her eyes moved slowly from him. They dwelt on Charlotte; and now the question in them was clear. 'Yes,' Charlotte said, her voice trembling with emotion. 'Yes, dear, yes! Sir Albery has brought the news. It is in the paper. Peggy, dear, dear

Peggy, you must live—you must live for his sake! For his sake, for your husband! He lives!’

She had got it now. They all saw it and were convinced of it. She understood. She closed her eyes and slowly two tears welled from them. ‘Thank God!’ she breathed, and this time they caught the words, faint as they were. Presently she opened her eyes again. They met Charlotte’s. ‘He is alive?’ she whispered.

‘Yes, dear, alive,’ Charlotte said, lying firmly. ‘In a few days he will be here. He will be by your bed, Peggy.’

It was Charlotte, too, who with a woman’s wit interpreted the weak movement of the hand, the slow change in the direction of the eyes; who took the paper from Wyke’s shaking hand and laid it on Peggy’s breast, and placed her nerveless hand upon it. The man doubted if he could have done it.

A dawning smile brightened for a moment the white face. Peggy heaved a faint sigh as of infinite satisfaction. She closed her eyes.

Wyke’s heart sank. He thought that they had failed. He thought that they had ventured all for nothing. But Charlotte’s hand found his hand, and ‘Come!’ she whispered. ‘Come!’ He rose to his feet, and obeying her gesture, he crept after her out of the room and down the stairs. The women below, huddled about the hearth, gazed at them, marvelling—probably they had heard through the raftered floor what had passed. But neither Wyke nor Charlotte heeded them. He was as one who had run a race, or come through some tremendous struggle. He wiped the moisture from his forehead, and turned weakly to the girl. ‘Have we failed?’ he muttered—and how naturally he turned to her! She had been the stronger—it was she who had done it all. But for her he would not at the last moment have dared to utter the lie. ‘Have we failed?’ he repeated huskily.

‘I don’t know! I don’t know!’ she said. ‘I think not! I think there’s a chance. It’s—it’s in God’s hands now!’ And with a suddenness that shocked him she sat down at the table and, dropping her face on her arms, burst into a passion of weeping. She who had been so strong above!

‘Oh, my dear! My dear!’ he cried, and, careless of the eyes that watched him, he put his arm about her shoulder. ‘Don’t! Don’t!’ he prayed.

She shook her shoulders, as much as to say, ‘Let me be!’

He was waiting for her to recover, all the man in him longing

to comfort her, and longing, too, to tell her what he thought of her, when a hand clutched his arm, and he turned, impatient of interruption. In a second he fell from the clouds. With horror he saw that a fresh trouble awaited them, and that he had not foreseen all the consequences of his act.

For the Captain, unnoticed, had crept down after them, and as Wyke turned the old man's grasp shifted from his arm to his breast. He clutched Wyke's coat, and with all his feeble strength he tried to shake him. 'Is it true?' he gasped, his voice whistling in the ecstasy of his hope, his face haggard and distorted. A lock of grey hair had fallen across his forehead and added to the wildness of his look. 'Is it true? Is it true?' he panted.

Wyke collected himself as well as he could. He must not shock the old man if it could be helped. 'Silence, sir, silence!' he said. 'For Heaven's sake, compose yourself. We must make no noise. True? I don't know! I don't know! It may be true! But I don't know.'

'Then you—you've heard—you've heard nothing?' the Captain stammered. But there was still hope, a desperate hope, in his eyes. He clung to it—it was all that he had to save him from the horror of self-reproach that made his thoughts a hell.

'No,' Wyke said reluctantly. 'No. I've heard nothing. But it may be true. We don't know.'

The Captain's hands fell. The light died out of his eyes. 'Then why—why,' he whispered, 'why did you—'

'To save her. To save her, man, if it be possible.'

A bitter cry burst from the wretched father, and 'Water! Water!' Wyke exclaimed. For the shock had been too much for the Captain. He collapsed, and but for the arm the other passed hastily round him the old man would have fallen to the floor.

'Lay him down!' Charlotte said, wiping away her tears. 'Flat! Flat!'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AUGUSTA took a strong view of it. 'I cannot think it was right,' she said. 'After all, the truth is the truth, my dear.'

'And I wouldn't give a fig for it—out of place!' Charlotte replied. 'For all we know it may be the truth. And if it were the biggest lie I ever told in my life, and that would not be a little one, I'd tell it again and thank you!'

'But I thought,' Augusta objected placidly, 'that it was Sir Albery who told it, Charlotte. I can understand him.'

'Oh, my dear, you flatter me! Gracious goodness, why should Sir Albery be less truthful than I am, I'd like to know!'

Augusta bent over her work. The two girls were in the drawing-room at the Rectory, and through the three tall windows the sunshine of a late spring day was pouring, discovering here and there the faded patch on chair or carpet that wear and a respectable antiquity had wrought. Lady Bicester would not have put up with them, but Augusta knew better, and the room justified her. 'Because I can see Sir Albery's interest in it,' she rejoined. 'While I cannot see yours, Charlotte.'

'I don't see that he had more interest in Peggy's life than I have!'

Augusta smiled. 'Don't you, my dear? Really?'

'No, I don't.'

'Then you are very simple, Charlotte. You know, or you don't seem to know'—Augusta viewed her work at leisure, her head a little on one side—'that young widows may marry again? He's been to the Cottage at least once a day since—since it happened, hasn't he?'

'And if he has?' Charlotte retorted, her colour rising. 'What then?'

'He has been there this morning?'

'No, he has not!'

'Then I am sure that there must be a good reason for it.'

'There is.' Charlotte's tone was dry, and a spark of malice, for really Augusta was too provoking, showed in her eyes. 'You see, my dear, he left for London last evening, so he could not call at the Cottage this morning.'

'Left for London?' Augusta looked up. She did not make any attempt to conceal her surprise. 'What has he gone there for? And with Peggy picking up so slowly? Well, you have surprised me, Charlotte. It is the last thing I should have expected him to do—at this time.'

'But he has gone all the same. It is on Peggy's account that he has gone.'

'Ah! Then I understand. But not what he has gone for.'

'He has gone to the Admiralty to see if he can learn anything. To learn for certain what has happened. If he cannot learn there, he talks of getting a safe-conduct for France if it be possible and

if he can get one. To make sure there whether—whether poor Peggy's man is alive.'

'Gracious!' Augusta exclaimed, laying down her work. 'Well, he has taken it badly! Nothing stops him, it seems. London, the Admiralty, France! You don't mean after that to say that he's off with the old love? Or that he has much doubt what he will learn when he gets there! I declare he is cleverer than I thought him—much cleverer.'

Charlotte looked disturbed. 'I don't believe that he is thinking of that at all!' she said. 'He has gone because—well, because we can't keep Peggy in the dark any longer, and we must gain time. We have had pretty work to keep the paper from her and lie about it till now. We have told her that he has taken it with him, and, while he is away, she will continue to believe, or at any rate to hope—for I don't know whether she does believe. And by the time we hear from him she will be stronger and better able to bear it.'

'A tissue of lies!' Augusta said drily. She shook her head. 'And presently you will be found out. And all the time you know very well, my dear, that there is hardly a chance that the man is alive.'

'I don't know,' Charlotte said. But she had lost her cheerful air. She looked gloomily at the carpet. 'I really don't know. I do think there is a chance. And after all,' she continued recklessly, 'Peggy is alive and is recovering, and I'd do it again to-morrow. What does it matter? She will be able to bear the news now, whatever it be.'

'And able to reward her knight,' Augusta said lightly. 'Of course I mean, my dear, after a decent interval. For I am quite sure that he is not one to override the conventions.'

'I think you are horrid, Augusta.'

'Because I see things as they are? And don't deceive myself as you do? To be sure, you have seen so much of Sir Albergy lately that you ought to be able to judge. But lookers-on see more of the game, Charlotte, believe me, and I think you will find that I am right.'

Charlotte rose, her face a little flushed. 'Well, at any rate he deserves her,' she said.

'And that is a comfort,' Augusta replied pleasantly, as she also rose. 'It is all as it should be, isn't it? Must you go, dear? Well, I dare say you will meet my father; he is somewhere in the

town. Indeed, I don't know what has taken him lately. He seems to be doing the curate's work.'

Charlotte, much tried, gave way to temptation. 'Well, it was about time he did,' she said. And she escaped before Augusta could scold her.

But Augusta had known—Augustas always do know—how to touch the tender spot, and for Charlotte, as she walked along the Rectory Lane, the day had lost something of its spring freshness. The sunshine seemed to be less bright, and when presently a bend in the road below her disclosed the sea, its rippling surface caressed by a west wind, it no longer wore the cheerful glitter that had charmed her as she came. She would have been glad to lay the blame on her friend; and more than once she told herself that Augusta was too provoking. But the change was in herself, and she knew it. She knew that it was with herself that she was annoyed. Silly dreams! Visions of which a peep in the mirror, or a glance at Peggy would have proved the folly. A grateful look earned by her devotion to another, a kind word flung to her when his heart was wrung for his old love's sake! Nothing more than that! And never, surely, had a girl bemused herself on flimsier grounds, lost herself in a glamour more unreal, taken for warm sunshine gleams more cold and wintry! 'Well, I must look in the glass!' Charlotte thought, staring ahead. 'I must look in the glass! No cure like that, my dear!'

But she thought before she had gone much farther of a better cure, and she halted at a door and knocked. It was a humble door a little beyond the barber's shop, and the woman who came out was the same Jael Cruddas who had stopped Wyke in the street ten days before. He had mentioned the case to Charlotte, and so feeble are good resolutions that it must be confessed that it was the feeling that she was sharing something with him that led her to choose that house out of a dozen.

'Well, Jael,' she said cheerfully—and how was the woman to know that her heart also was sore?—'and how are you this morning? I've just looked in as I passed. You must keep up your spirits for the little one's sake.'

'Well, miss, I'm faring middling,' the woman replied as she wiped her eyes with her apron—that was the proper etiquette in the circumstances. 'And to be sure, if anything would do me good it's the sight of your face, miss. Though indeed you're not looking as pert as common. The Rector he's not gone five minutes, as

I never thought to see wearing out a chair on my hearth ! And that forthcoming as shows how one can wrong a body. Twice he's been in, and the same to others, I b'lieve.'

'I am glad to hear it,' Charlotte said, not a little surprised herself, though she had heard elsewhere of the Rector's activities.

'Aye, and nothing as he could do too much, miss. Right vexed he seemed, as the Squire had been before him. But "Course we looks to him first, sir," I says, "as we always have looked, and them as was before us to his. And never found 'em wanting, I will say!"'

'And I'm sure he will not fail you now,' Charlotte said.

'No, miss, he's not one to change. But, oh, how I do sicken for news. I can't sleep of nights, and when I get a wink and wake and put out my hand, and he's not there—I'm that wild I can't say ! I dunno as not knowing isn't worse than knowing !'

The woman's words came home to Charlotte. There was the same aching in her breast. 'Still there's a chance, Jael,' she said. 'There is hope, you know. And Sir Albery has gone to London to do what he can !'

'God bless him for it ! And they'll 'tend to him, miss, that's certain, whoever goes short.'

Charlotte was not so certain of that, but she assented, said another word or two, and passed on. 'That's real sorrow !' she thought, taking herself to task, and recognising her own weakness. She had gone to hear him talked of and praised, and she had heard it, and what good had it done her ? 'The glass ! There is nothing but a good look in the glass !' she thought. 'It has come to that, my dear !'

Walking fast to relieve her feelings, she returned to the Cottage by the long road that wound round the landward side of the point, and sought a dubious and ignoble end among the pebbles and flotsam of the beach. Her upward path left it abreast of Budgen's house and not thirty paces from the fence that bounded his garden. Charlotte paused at the parting, impressed by the silence and loneliness of the Cove. She had known it alive with the cheerful hum of men and the clatter of tools, she had been present at more than one noisy launch from it, she had stood on the beach amid cheering crowds to see the *Pride* or the *Peggy* start on her venturesome cruise ; but save on a Sunday, when Devon men would rather drown than work, she had rarely if ever found the place as silent and deserted as it lay to-day. A moment's thought reminded her that it was the dinner hour, and, accepting the explanation, she was on

the point of moving on, when her eyes were caught by a figure standing alone on the shore in the angle between the bluff and the water. The cliff above and the sea beyond dwarfed the form, and as the silence had impressed Charlotte a moment before, the loneliness of this solitary watcher, the only human being within sight, impressed her now. Yet the man was not looking seawards. His face was turned towards her, and wondering what he did there, she shaded her eyes with her hand—there was a shimmer on the sea—and she recognised him. Some impulse led her to cross the strand towards him.

‘Why, Budgen,’ she said lightly. ‘I seldom see you idle? What are you looking at?’ But she had no sooner spoken than she repented of her tone. She had forgotten his share in the calamity, and she saw now that she was close to him that the man was changed. He had a three days’ beard on his chin, and he looked ill and sallow and shrunken. His answer matched his looks.

‘I’m taking my leave, taking my leave,’ he said dully, his tone lifeless. He did not look at her.

‘My good man!’ Charlotte remonstrated. ‘What do you mean?’

‘Mean? I’ll tell ye. Why not? Why not?’ he repeated in the same dreary tone. ‘D’you see that shed as I as good as built with my own hands? And as I’ve laboured most part of my life in? And the slips as I’ve launched boats from these thirty years? And the house as my grandfather built and I’ve lived in since I could crawl through the door and play wi’ the old shot as kept it open? And the garden and the cots? I built more than half of ’em! And the cranny here as holds all snug—so snug as I could call it all my own as far as I could see?’

His hopeless tone moved her as much as his words. Here was another change as odd as that in the Rector! She had known Budgen long, and she had never known him anything but churlish and thorny and sharp-tongued, set in a crabbed independence. She had never known him like this. But she had to answer him, and ‘Yes, I see them, Budgen,’ she said patiently. ‘What of them?’

‘They ain’t mine, they ain’t mine no longer. And I wish I were dead! I come here of a morning, where I can see ’em all of a piece—and how many mornings more ’ll I see ’em?’ A sound like a groan burst from him, the first sign of feeling that he had betrayed. ‘Not many more I’ll see ’em. They’re his, and he’ll take ’em, next week or the week after! He’ll take ’em, though they’ve been

my home for sixty years! Sixty years!' he repeated drearily. 'Summer and winter, rain and shine!'

Charlotte knew his story, and though she recognised his selfishness in face of greater griefs than his, she pitied him. 'But Joe mayn't be dead!' she said briskly. 'We don't know yet, Budgen. You're crying out before you're hurt, man.'

'He's dead!' he said. 'He's dead, I know.'

'But you cannot!' Charlotte objected. 'There must be some alive. We know there are. It is not as bad as that, Budgen.'

'He's dead,' he repeated darkly. 'There's things as are settled for us—settled for us. If there's one dead it's him. And it's my work, my work,' he continued in a tone that made Charlotte very uncomfortable. 'I might ha' known how 'twould be. I might ha' known there's them as makes the score even, though I didn't think it.'

'Come, come, Budgen,' she protested. 'You mustn't talk like that. If the worst comes to the worst and Joe's gone—but you can't know it, and no one knows it—you must talk to the Rector. I don't think he'll be hard on you. I don't indeed,' Charlotte repeated with a confidence that she would not have expressed a month before.

Something more of feeling—but it was a bitter black feeling—showed in Budgen's face. 'The Rector!' he said. And in a low voice, but with exceeding venom, and regardless of her presence, he cursed him, using terrible words, words not the less terrible for the restraint that he put upon his voice.

'Man!' Charlotte cried in horror. 'You are very wicked!'

'That's all by,' he rejoined, his eyes on the white house. 'All by, now. Done and to be paid for.' He had not met her eyes, even for a moment.

She went away from him, rather unhappy than shocked. Things seemed to be all wrong and awry; the world was full of sorrow and disappointment. She wished that she had not seen him—that she had not spoken to him. As she climbed wearily up the path to the Cottage she saw nothing of the airy grace of the gulls as they swung and poised in the ether below her, of their buoyancy and balance as they rode the incoming waves, but her ears were filled with the sadness of their wailing. She had to stand and compose herself before she could go in to Peggy, and greet her with the cheerful words and the smiling face that were needed.

(To be continued.)

PEN PORTRAITS IN JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS.

It is not, from most points of view, any advantage to be in a position to claim seniority ; nobody likes to recognise that bodily activity is on the wane, or that most of the people whom one meets in the course of the day are so much younger than oneself. But a vivid memory may become in some degree a counterbalancing factor. An accurate recollection of mid-Victorian events confers many privileges. Among these may be counted the intimate contact with those senior members of the family who were among the nearest relatives of Jane Austen. Her elder brother was my own grandfather, Sir Francis Austen, in whose house I spent my boyhood. There were nephews and nieces who could remember their Aunt Jane. There were others, including my mother and her sisters, who were wont to carry on a conversation on quite diverse subjects, in terms of quotations from the novels. Hence the phraseology, now accounted almost classic, became familiar to one's brain, more than seventy years ago.

In the course of a fairly active life, much of it spent far away from England, and very little in sight of south country downs and woodlands, I have kept in touch with most of the published records of Jane Austen, and have in recent years been frequently consulted as to the sequence of events bearing upon kindred subjects, although I do not claim to have anything within my own ken beyond traditions and correspondence of the family. With the highly prized permission of Mr. R. A. Austen-Leigh I have verified many points in the following narratives, utilising 'The Life and Letters of Jane Austen' (W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh ; Smith Elder and Co., 1913), a very safe authority.

While she deprecated the idea of copying her imaginary characters from those within her own surroundings, yet Jane Austen did not desire to ignore facts and real people altogether. Here I am tempted to remark that her imaginary characters have become more alive and real than are any of their flesh and blood contemporaries in the same walks of life. We are acquainted with Mr. Bennet much better than, shall we say, William Wilberforce, and few people could tell about George Stephenson as many details as are known concerning William Price.

A correspondent once informed Sir Francis Austen that he had

been compared to Captain Wentworth in 'Persuasion': I do not think that my grandfather, precise and methodical as he was, could ever have been quite like Captain Wentworth; the two views of life ashore were apparently so different. In answer to his correspondent, Sir Francis deprecates, to some extent, such a resemblance, but says, 'I rather think parts of Captain Harville's character were drawn from myself; at least the description of his domestic habits, tastes and occupations have a considerable resemblance to mine.' In 'Persuasion,' page 99, Clarendon Press Edition, we find Captain Harville engaged as follows: 'He drew, he varnished, he carpentered, he glued, he made toys for the children, he invented new netting needles and pins with improvements, and, if everything else was done, sat down to his large fishing net at one side of the room.'

'Persuasion' was finished in 1816. In 1815 and following years Francis was occupying Chawton House, lent to him by his brother, Edward Knight, and Jane mentions more than once that Francis came almost daily to the cottage to see his mother and sisters. Jane had therefore the opportunity for as many pen portraits as she wished to draw, and evidently availed herself of this opportunity to such purpose that Francis himself still recognised the picture many years later.

But there is other evidence. She mentions how her brother made fringe for the drawing-room curtains and his proficiency in the manufacture of rabbit nets. I can also add some personal testimony as regards the favourite occupations of my grandfather, such as I knew him when years and honours had accumulated. Toys made for his own children came down to our playroom and passed on to younger grandchildren later. A series of wood blocks composing a bridge with complete key pieces was our delight, and was probably coeval with 'Persuasion.' Before 1815 his continuous service afloat stood in the way of any such pastimes. The turning lathe was still, in our time, more or less in use, and the outcomes were so generally varnished that we had strict orders not to touch his new woodwork. Jane, in locating Captain Harville at Lyme Regis, has provided him with a large fishing net. Inland at Chawton and afterwards at Portsdown, the netting for fruit bushes and morella cherry was Sir Francis' winter pastime. Though in my boyhood I never heard him actually speak of his sister, in his extant letters there is ample confirmation of his admiring greatly both her character and her talent. He talks of the many nephews

and nieces crowding round Aunt Jane's chair to hear her children's stories, and anticipates facts in believing that her name will be well known long after that generation has passed away, wherever the English language is spoken or understood.

I submit that it is fairly evident that Jane Austen was in this instance ready to take real people as a basis for her characters. Naturally I am of opinion that she made a good selection. It is far from the actual fact to imagine that this or any other parallel trait of character is complete; there was no such thing as close copying in her methods; here and there her scheme includes a few salient points from one or other of those who were frequently in touch with her. Other parts of the picture of Captain Harville do not accord with her brother's sayings or doings. Differences as to shore life and aspirations have already been noted, but afloat Captain Wentworth and Captain Francis Austen stand out as true naval officers, ready for any emergency, apt to seize every opportunity of doing good service to their country. Her brother Francis, as one of Nelson's Band of Brothers, was, perhaps unconsciously, a model for Captain Wentworth's successes, so much more quickly obtained in fiction than in the British Navy. Captain Wentworth makes his fortune in prize money in eighteen hundred and war time. Promotion was a very leisurely proceeding after 1815, and honours were awarded by slow degrees and at long last. Nearly fifty years after 'Persuasion' was written, Sir Francis was promoted (1863) to be Admiral of the Fleet, receiving a message from Queen Victoria that she approved of the appointment 'as a well-deserved reward for brilliant services.'

I have come to the conclusion, probably not altogether an original one, that the character of Mary Crawford may be founded, to some extent, on that of Jane's cousin and sister-in-law, Eliza, daughter of Philadelphia Hancock, who was the only surviving sister of Jane's father, George Austen. Philadelphia married Dr. Hancock of Calcutta, a personal friend of Warren Hastings, who stood sponsor for their only daughter, Betsy. About 1765 the Hancocks came home, and later, after the expiration of Dr. Hancock's furlough with the East India Company, Philadelphia and Betsy stayed frequently at Steventon Rectory. The child, a few years older than any of her cousins there, became a centre of attraction in the family circle. As time went on, she assumed a leadership in the favourite amusement of acting charades and short plays, with two or three of the elder children. As we read in 'Northanger

Abbey,' 'What young woman of common gentility will reach the age of sixteen without altering her name as far as she can?' So Betsy became Eliza, while Jane Austen was still an infant. Philadelphia and Eliza went to live in France, a move which resulted in a brilliant marriage with a French noble, Jean Capotte, Comte de Feuillide, about 1781. Now we may picture this attractive and high-spirited young Comtesse making her entry at the Court of Versailles, traversing those rooms in the Palace so full of memories of the later Bourbons, and taking her appointed place in the circle of Marie Antoinette in the gardens and *salons* of the Trianon. The Comte de Feuillide was an officer in the Queen's Dragoon Regiment, and the Comtesse is said to have taken a part in theatricals performed in the Queen's presence. Eliza could certainly indulge her taste for gaiety and amusement at Versailles. They took up their residence, too, periodically, on the family estates at Le Marais in Guienne, and seem to have cared sincerely for the interests of their tenants in Languedoc.

In 1786 Eliza came over to England; this visit coincided with the birth of their boy, named Hastings after her distinguished godfather. The Comte seems to have been anxious for an English domicile for his son, who died young eventually. Possibly the father had serious misgivings as to the future of France. At this time Eliza's visit to Steventon must have made a lasting impression on Jane, then a child of eleven. Writing in August 1788, Eliza expresses an opinion that things in France were quieter than they had been some months earlier, when she had feared that the Comte might have to go on active service against revolt. Then came the Revolution with all its ominous outlook for the aristocracy. Still the leave of absence granted in 1791 and 1792 to the Comte de Feuillide does not give the idea of any general proscription of the *noblesse*. It was only in June 1792 that he received an intimation that his leave had already been exceeded, and that if he remained in England he would be treated as an *émigré* and his whole property would be confiscated. Considering that in January 1791 he had been at Turin with the Royal Princes, the warning just quoted does not seem very vindictive. He was, however, unable to leave France again, and, getting enmeshed through efforts to help other aristocrats in their difficulties, he was guillotined in Paris in February 1794.

As a widow, Steventon again became a place of refuge for Eliza. Her cousin Jane was now nineteen, and had become very quick

to observe and to record results of her observations. It was not long before theatricals were resumed. Eliza's experiences at Versailles, and subsequent changes of fortune, had endowed her character with many new traits, sometimes almost clashing with each other. She must have been a delightful inmate at the Rectory, and very fascinating to the girls, Cassandra and Jane. Their elder brother, Henry, was again Eliza's chief coadjutor in the play-acting, and the outcome was that he became her second husband in 1797. All that she had gone through had served to develop much strength of will, and competence in emergency. What could be more natural than her going with Henry to France at the Peace of Amiens? Thereby they ran imminent risk of the eleven years' internment at Verdun which befell so many British subjects when the First Consul suddenly renewed the War, and gave orders for their immediate arrest. Eliza took charge of the successful plan of escape. They agreed that Henry should be relegated to an invalid rôle in the corner of their travelling carriage. No one at the posting stations could detect her nationality; her perfect command of French, spoken as it would be at Napoleon's own court, disarmed all suspicion. They passed on, stage after stage, without question. No precaution was neglected, but, on such a journey, we may imagine Eliza's oft-repeated sigh of relief when the carriage was again in motion, and quitting some town gay with the new tricolor which had replaced the fleur-de-lis so familiar in her younger days.

As years go on, the mentions of Eliza in Jane's correspondence are often sympathetic on the score of her declining health. The tendency to caprice in the matter of amusement and otherwise was evidently accentuated, in all likelihood by failing strength. In one of Jane's letters, of which the original is in the British Museum, dated in 1811, there occurs an allusion to some characteristic prejudice against Eliza's own cousin, the Reverend Henry Walter, a distinguished Cambridge don. The Henry Austens were then living in Sloane Street, where Mr. Walter called and was invited by Henry to stay to dinner, 'a circumstance which did not give much pleasure at the time,' says Jane, 'but it is all over now, and she likes him very well,' when he had been present at an evening party of eighty guests. He could not know that there had been some question as to sending him an invitation.

In the same year, 1811, Jane Austen was busy with 'Mansfield Park.' If in Mary Crawford she wanted to portray a really

generous and strong character, full of whimsical caprice and love of amusement, she had before her the story and the type, in those of Eliza. In the novel, incident and developments might well take an entirely divergent course. Mary Crawford's few months' appearance leaves her unmarried. Eliza's story is that of an almost life-long romance, including two marriages. No talented contemporary chronicler did for her what Jane Austen has accomplished for Mary Crawford, who is so charming and attractive in her caprice. 'I am sure it is a very long wood.' . . . 'When I say that we have walked a mile in it, I speak within compass.' It is quite like Edmund Bertram to say, 'Now, Miss Crawford, if you will look up the walk you will convince yourself that it cannot be half a mile, nor half half a mile.' 'It is an immense distance,' she maintains; 'I see that at a glance.' There is much less tone of inconsequence where Mary insists that she cannot marry Edmund unless he gives up the idea of being ordained. There is no ready explanation of Eliza's prejudice against Henry Walter, unless it originated in want of appreciation of clergy. Henry Austen had also the wish to take orders before he fell in love with Eliza, but we hear no more of this until his actual ordination took place in 1816, three years after Eliza's life ended. It has been stated that her refusal of James Austen in her youth was on account of his being destined for the Church, but this may be merely family tradition. Mary Crawford says, 'If you can persuade Henry (her brother) to marry, you must have the (persuasive) address of a Frenchwoman,' which reads like a remark of the *ci-devant* Comtesse de Feuillide.

The episode of the frustrated preparations for acting 'Lovers' Vows' has so much in common with memories of Steventon theatricals. Perhaps there was a French translation of that, or some similar German play, in vogue at the Trianon, brought from Vienna by Marie Antoinette herself. It is true that Mary Crawford is not the directing genius of the Mansfield Park stage, but she plays the heroine, as Eliza was wont to do at the Rectory, of yore. How deeply Mary was touched by 'Lovers' Vows' comes out when she is again in Fanny Price's east room.

'Once, only, was I in this room before. I came to rehearse. Your cousin came too, we had a rehearsal. You were our audience and prompter. A delightful rehearsal, I shall never forget it. Here we were just in this part of the room; here was your cousin; here was I; here were the chairs! Oh, why do such things pass away!'

Mary finds Mansfield Parsonage quite as intolerably dull as Eliza considered the surroundings of Steventon to be; she was apparently held there by her affection for its inmates. Eliza was much keener about the London gaieties, ready to go from a reception by the Duchess of Cumberland straight to Almack's, till five in the morning. Eliza, like Mary, had 'the right of a lively mind, saying whatever may contribute to its own amusement, and that of others.'

Mary Crawford is as continuously and sincerely kind to Fanny Price as was Eliza to Cassandra and Jane, in those days at the Rectory and afterwards.

Perhaps it may be conceded that there is a considerable resemblance, in certain traits of character, between the real Eliza de Feuillide and the imaginary Mary Crawford.

I turn now to what is perhaps the best-known example of adaptation of a real character to the purposes of Jane Austen's story. There can be very little doubt that her 'own particular little brother,' Charles, is in some respects the original of William Price, who plays only a minor part in 'Mansfield Park,' though one that adds greatly to its charm. Charles was the youngest of the Steventon family, nearly four years junior to Jane; she must have taken a very active interest in the preparations for his entry into the Navy, and we find throughout the extant letters to Cassandra frequent and most affectionate references to his doings in the service. The tone is always one of tender solicitude, whatever may be the special event to be discussed at the moment.

William Price is delineated as elder brother of Fanny, though only by a year or so. When she, still in childhood, becomes an inmate of her uncle's house at Mansfield Park, it soon happens that William, determining to be a sailor, was invited to spend a week with his sister before he went to sea. 'Their eager affection in meeting, their exquisite delight in being together, their hours of happy mirth may be imagined; as well as the sanguine views and spirits of the boy, even to the last.'

We have Charles described, by a member of the family, as 'expansive, affectionate, and eminently loveable'; all such characteristics may be assumed to be innate, and, though they did in fact prevail throughout his long life, they were at least as prominent during youth.

We have to part company with William Price soon after he gets his lieutenant's commission at the age of twenty. The plan that

Fanny and William were to have a cottage together in middle life was never to be realised, since Fanny settled down as Mrs. Edmund Bertram. When 'Mansfield Park' was in the making, Charles was already married, at Bermuda; his expansive and affectionate nature could scarcely be expected to withstand the loneliness of seven years' absence from home ties.

We have the seven years of foreign service on the part of William Price.

'William her brother, the so long absent and dearly loved brother, was in England again. She had a letter from him herself, a few hurried happy lines from the *Antwerp* at anchor in Spithead.' His sister had been his best correspondent during a period of seven years. When William arrives, Sir Thomas Bertram 'received a young man of an open pleasant countenance and frank, unstudied, but feeling and respectful manner.' With brother and sister 'Every former united pain and pleasure' was retraced with the fondest recollection.

Charles, after a year's service in the Mediterranean as second lieutenant of the *Scorpion* brig, considered himself quite neglected because he did not get moved into a larger ship, and used all available influence towards mending his position; he was only nineteen, but young naval officers got on rapidly before Trafalgar. Eventually he took an opportunity of laying his grievances before the First Lord of the Admiralty, and got moved into a frigate, the desired objective for real active service and adventure in those days. The next thing is that he spends his prize money in topaz crosses for his sisters; these crosses are still in the family and were photographed for 'Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers' (John Lane, 1905), a volume compiled by my daughter and myself.

William Price has grievances too; he is nearly twenty, and only a midshipman. Douglas Jerrold relates how he had served as a boy on board the *Namur* at Sheerness, in 1814, under Charles Austen as captain, and how there were midshipmen aged 40 and 50, in the gunroom. But no William Price could imagine such a future in his own case, and he quite unconsciously enlists influence at headquarters. William was often called upon by Sir Thomas to be the talker. 'His recitals were amusing in themselves, but the chief object' of his uncle 'was to understand the reciter, and he listened to his clear, simple, spirited details, seeing in them the proof of good principles, professional knowledge, energy, courage and cheerfulness.' Henry Crawford hears, and resolves to help, takes

William to see Admiral Crawford. The result is told in three letters.

'The first was from the Admiral to inform his nephew, in a few words, of his having succeeded in the object he had undertaken and enclosing two more; one is from the Secretary of the First Lord to a friend whom the Admiral had set to work in the business; the other was from that friend to himself, by which it appeared that his Lordship had the very great happiness of attending to the recommendation of Sir Charles; that Sir Charles was much delighted in having the opportunity of proving his regard for Admiral Crawford, and that the circumstance of Mr. William Price's Commission as Second Lieutenant of H.M. Sloop *Thrush* being made out, was spreading general joy through a wide circle of great people.'

Presently 'William had obtained a ten days' leave of absence to be given to Mansfield Park, and was coming to show his happiness.' The new uniform had to remain at Portsmouth, and there were fears that 'all its own freshness and all the freshness of its wearer's feelings' would be worn away before Fanny could see it. 'What can be more unbecoming than the uniform of a Lieutenant who sees others made Commanders before him?' So it is arranged that brother and sister go home to Portsmouth together. 'William was almost as happy in the plan as his sister.' 'Everything supplied an amusement to the high glee of William's mind, and he was full of frolic and joke in the intervals of the high-toned subjects, all of which ended, if they did not begin, in praise of the *Thrush*.' 'The *Thrush* was certainly the finest sloop in the service.' 'Schemes for an action with some superior force,' led to 'speculations upon prize money, which was to be generously distributed at home.'

Then, at the Mansfield Park ball, we come to the 'very pretty amber cross' which William had brought to his sister from Sicily, not to speak of her difficulties as to wearing it suitably, with the other gifts of necklace and chain.

We come to an end of William's story, but Charles goes on through life, with the same sort of enthusiasms and devotion to duty, the same consideration for others, and promptitude in accepting responsibility.

Captain Spencer Ellman was a young midshipman in the *Aurora*, in 1825, when she was anchored in Spithead ready for a second cruise to the West Indies, and has recorded the following episode.

Charles Austen was conning the roadstead with his glass, on the

beac
flag
Cap
Adm
the
said
With
duri
the
H
man
Rang
Gove
his
his
his
H
by J
youth
In
not q
more
portra
in par
real p
is the
that n
mind
human
effusio
chosen
She

beach near Gosport, where he then lived. He saw the Captain's flag half-masted in the *Aurora*, took a boat out, and learned that Captain Marshall had just died. Then he took a post chaise to the Admiralty. He was the first to report the vacancy, and asked for the appointment. 'When could he take command?' 'To-morrow,' said Charles, and he was given the post, and sailed in four days. With a crew of three hundred, there was but one death on board during the ensuing three years in the tropics. The Surgeon and the Captain were vigilant.

His last exploits were in 1852, when as Rear-Admiral Commanding-in-chief he assisted at the captures of Martaban and Rangoon, and died of cholera on the Irrawaddy near Prome. The Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, took occasion to express his 'admiration for the stanch high spirit, which, notwithstanding his age and previous sufferings, had led Admiral Austen to take his part in the trying service which closed his career.'

He undoubtedly fulfilled the aspirations so strikingly expressed by Jane, whether she was writing of Charles himself or of his youthful counterpart, William Price.

In drawing from the novels these parallels, which perhaps do not quite exhaust such instances, my only aim is to emphasise, more completely than ever, Jane Austen's extraordinary power of portraying character. She adapted her minutely studied effects, in part at least, from fact and from her power of observation of real people. That she could make those characters what they are is the best proof of commanding genius. Her own opinion was that novels ought to be 'works in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusion of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language' ('Northanger Abbey,' chapter v.).

She succeeded better than she would ever have acknowledged.

JOHN H. HUBBACK.

THE CAVE OF SHIVA.

By L. JOAN TOWNEND.

INDIA offers some interesting surprises to travellers in out-of-the-way and apparently dull corners. One such came to me recently while on tour with my husband and the Superintendent of Police and his sister.

We were touring in the district of Jalpaiguri, which lies along the foot of the Himalayas, more or less due north of Calcutta. Part of the district is better known to the world in general as the Dooars, of tea-growing fame. Physically it is a most attractive country, though parts of it have an unenviable reputation for malaria and blackwater fever. On the north it runs up into the fringe of the hills, and spreads itself south on to the great Gangetic plain. At intervals, clear, swiftly-flowing rivers, bringing down the snow water from the everlasting hills, break out of the mountain barrier, and flow down to join the Brahmaputra. Much of the northern part of the district is under cultivation for tea, but there are still large areas of forest, abounding with wild life—tigers, leopards, elephants, rhinoceroses, bear, deer of several sorts, pig, and many other species.

At the time of which I am speaking we were staying at a little forest bungalow, built of roughly hewn trunks of trees and bamboo matting screens. It stood at a spot where one of these beautiful rivers flows down from the hills. Built on the river bank, it looked north-east across the river to the hills, rising range upon range into the blue distance.

The Eastern Bengal Railway has stretched a finger up to this remote spot for the sake of the stone, so plentiful there and non-existent in the delta of the Ganges.

The little clearing in the forest was busy with small trains, puffing to and fro, to fetch the stones, quarried by some hundreds of workmen in the river-bed, and transship them into the big trains, to be carried all over Eastern Bengal.

We arrived at this place, Jainti by name, in the middle of the day, after an adventurous drive in a Ford car, over forest tracks which could scarcely be honoured by the name of road.

The men had official duties to attend to as soon as we had had

a meal, and Miss J. and I, having feasted our eyes on the beauty of the landscape, began to inquire for matters of local interest.

A stout and nervous Sub-Inspector of Police, and a Government Surveyor, slim and equally nervous, were produced to be questioned by us. Unfortunately their English was very poor, but their position such that it would have been insulting to speak to them in Hindustani. Conversation was therefore rather difficult, but gradually we learnt that there was a Mela, or fair, somewhere in the neighbourhood, and, thinking that we might see picturesque Bhutaneses from the neighbouring hills, and perhaps attractive goods brought down by them, we said we should like to go. We were then told that the buying and selling were over, and that many of the people had gone on 'pilgrimage' to a 'temple' of Shiva, some three miles away. 'Well,' said we, 'let us go there too!'

The eyes of the Sub-Inspector nearly bulged out of his head. He looked at the *Armin* (surveyor) and the *Armin* looked at him in a state of great perturbation! 'What is the matter?' said I. 'Is there any difficulty?' 'Madame,' said he, 'there is no road! Sometimes you must climb rocks, and sometimes go in the water, and at last the path is very narrow.'

At this moment two of the Forest Officers appeared; they were travelling through to some other place, and, hearing we were about, called in to see us. One of them had known this district for years, and to him we appealed for more information. He told us that the temple was not a temple, but a cave, sacred to Shiva, and a great place of pilgrimage at certain times of the year. He himself had never been there, but believed that it was four or five miles up the river gorge, a rough walk, with a steep climb at the end and too much of an expedition for us to accomplish that afternoon. He was in a hurry himself, but sent for his local Forest Babu and told him to give us any help he could.

Moohoori Babu, as this gentleman was called, proved to be a mine of information, and was able to tell us all that we wanted to know. He explained that he could send us a mile and a half on a trolley, and provide us with a couple of coolies as guides, but that we must be prepared for a rough walk, climbing over rocks, wading through the river, and finally for a very stiff climb of a thousand feet, and an entrance into the cave only $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter. 'Indeed, many stout persons are unable to enter!' said he. Looking at his generous curves, I wondered if he had been, but thought it too pointed to inquire just then. Miss J. and I said

we were quite prepared to face all this, and named the following day for the expedition, starting at 10 o'clock.

We took a small bag of sandwiches and fruit, and a bottle of lemon squash, said good-bye to our men folk, who were once more busy with official duties, and set off on the trolley, Moohoori Babu accompanying us to the end of the trolley line and talking of the nature of Shiva and his greatness.

The *Armin* begged to be allowed to come too, and although we thought he, with his shaky English, might be rather a nuisance, we had not the heart to refuse him.

Two wild-looking Bhutia coolies were waiting to accompany us, dressed in the capacious kimono-like garment which they always favour, and carrying unsheathed khukries in their hands. They greeted us with the gleaming smile which is such a feature of the mountain folk, and showed the greatest keenness to show us anything they thought of interest.

The trolley line was cut through thick jungle on the edge of the river bed. By the time we reached the end of it, the valley had begun to narrow, and was astoundingly lovely.

We set off in single file, crossing the river, to begin with, on very shaky stepping stones. We were just able to follow the track of footprints on the rocks and sand along the river bank, and it was a case of stepping from rock to rock, sometimes climbing huge boulders, and scrambling down the other side, sometimes crossing bridges made of a single sapling, felled and laid across from one rock to another, and once we had to take off our shoes and stockings and wade knee deep in the ice-cold, crystal-clear water. Sometimes the river would twist itself into rapids, at other times it would form deep pools between overhanging rocks, and here our guides would crouch on the edge and point with their unsheathed knives at the fish lying in the shadows.

Always the great hills were narrowing in upon us, and the valley turning into a gorge, as we pressed up and up into the mountains. The vegetation was profuse and richly green all up the mountain sides, and there were many beautiful birds and butterflies.

Some way up the gorge we had to climb a hundred feet or more over a steep spur of some substance that looked like shale with streaks of iron in it. It was very steep, and slipped beneath our feet, but we came safely down to the water again on the other side, to find ourselves confronted with enormous cliffs of rock on either

hand, almost shutting out the sunlight, and narrowing the river into a channel not more than 30 feet in width.

Through this place a rough bridge had been built of small tree trunks, with a bamboo hand-rail. The water beneath must have been 12 or 15 feet deep, and looked like some huge aquamarine. It was a wonderful spot! The great rocks towered above us and the mountains above them again, and the river roared through the narrow place, so that we had to raise our voices to make them heard at all.

Not far beyond this we came to the place where we left the river and began the final climb. The mountain side rose in front of us almost like a cliff, and, still in single file, we followed the little zig-zag path. It rose so steeply that frequently we had to hold on to trees to help ourselves up. Here and there we came to a rock face where toe-holes had been cut, and up these we had to clamber, holding on by the roots of the trees above. One such stretch lasted for some 50 feet! I did not like the look of it at all, but dared not look round to see how Miss J. was taking it, for I felt that having come so far we must go on. So, with many pauses for breath, we struggled on. When we were nearing the top some pilgrims passed us coming down, three or four men and three women, two of them quite old, with grey hair, and their feet almost cut to bits on the stones. How they ever accomplished that climb I cannot imagine! Faith must have been what carried them through. They asked the *Armin* if we were going to Mahakul Guri (the cave), and hearing that we were they salaamed to the ground before each of us and went on their downward way, hanging on like monkeys.

At last we reached a little ledge on the mountain side, where the Sadhus in charge of the cave had built a small hut. Two of them came out to greet us. Fine-looking, picturesque figures they were, with aquiline features, long beards and hair (but not smeared with dirt and ashes), rosaries round their necks, and the red and yellow mark of Shiva on their foreheads.

I gave the 'namushka'—the Bengali greeting—with both hands to the forehead, and asked if they spoke Hindustani. They replied in the affirmative, and bringing out a piece of matting they spread it under a thatched roof outside the hut and asked us to sit down, squatting on their heels beside us.

We thereupon embarked on a long philosophical discussion on the merits of Shiva and of the Hindu Trinity, some of which I was

able to follow, but other parts escaped me. The elder Sadhu told me that the head represents Brahma, the Creator; the body belongs to Vishnu, the Preserver; and from the loins down is the province of Shiva, the Destroyer, and the Creator of eternal life. 'Shiva,' said he, 'is the greatest of all gods. Before him there is no caste and no nationality.' Then taking my arm in his hand, the Sadhu went on, 'The same blood runs in your veins as in mine. We came from the same place, we go to the same place. In the presence of Shiva we are the same.' Talk ranged on in this sort of vein until I thought the time had come when I could ask whether we might visit the cave. The Sadhus assented to our request with apparent pleasure, only stipulating that we should take off our shoes. We had removed our stockings earlier in the day, and were quickly free of our shoes too.

From the ledge on which we were sitting a great rock face rose up sheer above us. To reach the cave we had to climb three iron ladders set against it, the first two about 30 feet, and the last about 20 feet in height. The first one was not too bad. The iron rungs were set flat, and gave a fairly comfortable hold for the foot. From the top of that one we got on to a tiny ledge about a couple of feet wide, and holding by a single hanging chain we had to work our way along to the foot of the next ladder—and this is the one that will live in my memory for ever. The rungs were about two feet apart and set on edge, so that the whole weight of the body was resting on what seemed like a knife edge of iron to our poor bare feet. It was pure torture while it lasted, but luckily it had its end, like all things good and bad.

We next found ourselves on a slightly wider ledge, with rock overhanging above, and a row of great brass bells slung across it. Every time we moved we rang one or other of these bells with some portion of our anatomy, and I wondered if we were committing sacrilege. Here we had to leave our topees before the final ascent into the cave. The younger Sadhu went first up the last iron ladder and disappeared into a small hole. I followed, and found that off the top of the ladder I had to step on to a single point of rock, luckily worn smooth and soft by many feet, and thrust myself into this tiny aperture. I got completely stuck, and for a horrible moment I thought I should never get in or out. I wriggled free once more, and got my foot on the rock pinnacle, calling out pitifully, 'I can't do it! I can't do it!' The elder Sadhu from below called up 'Yes, go, Memsahib, please go!' Once more I tried, and once

more I stuck. Miss J. said she had the greatest ado to keep from laughing, for anything more ridiculous than my legs waving helplessly in the air, and the very dirty soles of my feet she had never seen. Once more I said I could not do it, so the Sadhu told me to come down, and he would show just the one and only possible way to get into the cave. Down I went, and up he came, and showed how one had to put one's left foot on the rock point, and lying over on one's left side, thrust, first one's arms, and then one's head, into the hole, gripping a rock ledge inside, and pulling, and at the same time kicking against the rock wall behind with the right foot. This demonstration given, down he came, and repeated his instructions to us once more at close quarters, with a good deal of pantomime and striking metaphor.

Fortified by all these instructions, I once more ascended the ladder, still somewhat dubious of my ability to squeeze into the cave. I followed the directions minutely, and rather to my surprise everything happened as he said. I shot into the cave like a bullet from a gun, arriving prostrate on the rock floor.

The cave was small and pitch dark, save for the light of a tiny wax taper, which the younger Sadhu had taken in. The roof was covered with long stalactites—an inverted forest of drops of stone. On one side three knobs of stone, rising from the rock floor, were the sacred dwelling places of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. They were painted red, and scattered over with offerings of marigolds and other flowers. Before them lay a mass of rice, ghee and wilted flowers in unpleasant confusion. The sides of the cave were damp, but I saw no actual spring of water. The air was heavy and stale, and the rock floor under our feet had a strange feel like some sort of unearthly velvet, worn smooth, I suppose, through hundreds of years, by millions of bare feet.

What power had drawn those millions of feet from distant places on the plains below? What had nerved them to overcome the toil and difficulty of reaching this remote spot? It must obviously be the same sort of faith that carried thousands of people on pilgrimage about Europe, to visit relics of the Saints, in the Middle Ages. The same that to-day draws incredible crowds to the Grotto of Lourdes. Shiva, the Destroyer, is credited with great power to cure bodily ill: to stay his hand, so to speak; and no doubt many visit his shrines in the hope of winning freedom from illness and pain. He also holds power for the future life, and those who face trials and difficulties to do him honour will, no doubt,

benefit in the hereafter. Some such thoughts as these flashed through my brain during the few moments before Miss J. shot into the cave after me. She was followed in rapid succession by the elder Sadhu, the *Armin*, and one of the coolies.

There was just room for the six of us to squat on the floor, native fashion. We made a strange and unforgettable picture crouching there. The fitful candle-light brought out the salient points of colour and feature. The rest faded into the deep blackness of the background.

The incongruity of the party photographed itself vividly on my mind ! Before me were the red stones, with the yellow and white flowers ; bending above them, with his candle in his hand, the younger Sadhu, the light shining on the red and yellow mark of Shiva, and picking out the high lights on nose, brow and eyes, and on the beads of his rosary ; his dusky skin and hair and his brownish woollen wrap fading into the shadows. Next to him I was conscious of myself, in modern lilac-coloured cotton, and on my left hand was Miss J., her pink and white English complexion, curly brown shingled head, and gaily flowered cretonne frock showing up with almost startling clearness against the dark background. Beyond her, in violent contrast of Ancient East and Modern West, was the figure of the elder Sadhu, his red and yellow caste mark and strongly marked features shining out of the dimness. Practically all one could see of the *Armin* and the coolie was the light on their faces, which were an interesting contrast. The *Armin*, with the small features and soft contours of the dweller in the fertile plains, and the coolie, a hillman, almost pure Mongol, with the yellowish skin, high cheek bones, narrow slanting eyes, square jaw, and mouth ready alike for quick laughter and quick anger.

Looking up, the candle-light made a spot of light on the point of each stalactite, and they faded into the mysterious dimness of the roof. In this strange setting the Sadhus once more began talking of the nature and power of Shiva. I asked how the cave came to be known, and had some difficulty in following the rapid Hindustani in which the answer was given. I gathered that many hundred years ago it was revealed to some man in a dream that the presence of Shiva was brooding in this cave. He set out to find it and do honour to the great god. At last, after many difficulties, he discovered the cave, and the sacred linga. He spread the news to others, and the cave became a place of pilgrimage for the devout. It is under the special protection of the Maharajah and the

Dharma Raja of Bhutan, who are respectively the political and spiritual heads of that country. Every year some Bhutanese are sent to help the Sadhus rebuild the frail bridges which the river washes away when the melting of the snows, followed by the heavy rains of the monsoons, send it down in flood, and it sweeps all before it. Actually, the cave must be right on the border, if not actually in Bhutan. For six or seven months of the year it is completely cut off from human access, and the Sadhus have to come down from their ledge, and live in the forest at Jainti. The elder Sadhu had been in attendance on the cave for fifteen years.

At the end of this long dissertation the younger Sadhu was just about to pick up some of the red powder off the stones, and smear the Shiva mark on my forehead, but the elder man stopped him in time. However, he took my hand, and pressed into it a mixture of rice, ghee and this same red powder, scraped up from the little altar. He passed some across to Miss J., and we were greatly embarrassed by these handfuls of stuff, and I finally hit on the happy idea of asking him to carry it down to the hut for us, as I was afraid we might drop it during the descent of the ladders.

The exit from the cave was easier than I expected. The coolie and the *Armin* squeezed against the rock to allow the elder Sadhu and ourselves to pass. The *Armin*, by the way, who had started out in a neat khaki Norfolk jacket and riding breeches, khaki stockings and European shoes, had been deprived of most of his clothing before being allowed into the cave, and all that was left to him was his breeches, and these he had to unlace and roll up above his knees.

The Sadhu disappeared first from our view, and we followed him blindly, feet first. Gravity evidently helped us, for we slid out quite easily, and the Sadhu had kindly perched himself on a little excrescence of rock so that he could place our feet on the rock point and the top rung of the ladder, and so save us the uncomfortable feeling of hanging over space with no foothold.

It was rather a relief to get out into the air and sunshine once more. At the foot of the top ladder, behind the brass bells, was another cave, full of stalactites, and apparently sacred to various local deities. There were three stones in different parts of the cave, marked with the usual red powder and flower offerings. One, I gathered, the local god of wild beasts, Mahakul, who might well be propitiated by such as live in those jungles, or venture through them after dark. From the mouth of this cave we walked along

the ledge, clanging the bells *en route*, and found it continued into a small passage-like tunnel, which after a few yards came out on to yet another ledge, roofed over, and surrounded by fossilised tree roots, giving the impression of the finest Gothic tracery. It was marvellous to look up and see the under side of the roots of what was once a great tree, frozen into a stone canopy. It was dome shaped, and must have been 10 or 12 feet in diameter. The whole thing seemed to be perfect, exactly as one has sometimes seen the roots of a tree torn bodily from the ground by a hurricane, and exposed to one's gaze. We longed for someone with geological knowledge to tell us how this great root could have been turned to stone, and how it could have remained in position, and become harder than the substance surrounding it, which must have been washed away at some remote period by the action of the water on the hills. The effect of the symmetrical pattern of the roots over our heads, and falling down to the rock on either hand, was that of a beautifully contrived balcony, looking out on a gorgeous prospect of valley and mountain. I frankly did not look down, for our balcony was only two or three feet wide, and I knew there was nothing much between us and the river, a thousand feet below.

We had another tiresome little climb up some sharp rocks to get into yet another cave, sacred to Shiva's consort, the terrible Kali, who is the most popular deity in Bengal. A knot of rock had been chosen to represent her, and was daubed with scarlet and decorated with flowers as usual, and had the customary offerings of rice and ghee before it.

A small spring trickled out of the cave side, and was caught in a rock basin before the altar. The water was clear and pleasant where it came out of the rock, but in the pool it was mixed with offerings, and became muddy and offensive.

The Sadhu told us to squat down, and he did the same, breaking into a chant, and suddenly he dipped his hands into the water and splashed it all over us. We both ducked and shut our eyes, and I laughed to myself at the thought that he was probably praying that we might be blessed with innumerable offspring.

This was really the last of the caves, and we made our way down to the Sadhu's hut. I asked if we might have water to wash our hands, and he brought it in a brass pot and poured it over them for us. Again he spread his mat and asked us to sit down, and brought out sweetmeats of sugar and curd for us to eat. We sat and talked for a little, and then, and not till then, did he ask who

we were. At last we made our farewells, and leaving an offering of a few rupees each, we started downwards.

As I came up I had looked forward with some apprehension to the descent; but whether the strength of Shiva buoyed us up, or whether the thought of a good wash in the clear water of the river, and drink and food cast all other considerations into the background, the fact remains that we pranced gaily down without turning a hair.

We spent half an hour over our ablutions and lunch, and reached Jainti again about 4 o'clock, pleasantly tired, and full of our day's adventures.

I was immensely struck by the kindness and courtesy with which we were received and welcomed into this Hindu holy of holies. I suppose it was due to the complete isolation of the place. I had asked the Sadhus if any Europeans had been there before, and was told that a Colonel Sahib had been there many years ago, but apparently he had been their sole former visitor from the Western world.

During many years in India I have visited a good many Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries, and Mahommedan mosques. In places off the beaten track I have always been received kindly, though never, I think, with such a warm welcome as was given us by the Sadhus at the cave. In places which are constantly visited by the tourist, the European is either excluded entirely from the holy places, or he is exploited as a commercial investment.

One fact that too many Westerners fail to realise is, that to the Hindu, the Buddhist, and the Mahommedan, his holy places are just as sacred as ours are to us. A little more thought in this direction would often throw open doors which are now closed, and not only the material doors into places of worship, but the doors into the minds of their guardians as well.

ROMANCE SANS PAROLES.

BY JAN GORDON.

I.

I HAD intended, if favoured by luck, to have a good sleep on the way down to Spain. But I had unwisely terminated my dinner at a restaurant with a cup of coffee, and the coffee had been excellent; too excellent indeed, for I had been tempted to a second cup. Now I was to pay for it by wakefulness. Still I lay stretched out on the wooden bench of the third-class carriage in order to dissuade the really courteous passengers, who seldom disturb a sleeping man. My chance companion, evidently an experienced traveller also, had a similar technique, and thus we sped southwards through the night comfortably alone. We were both obviously artists—paint-boxes and bundle of easels are trade-marks that need no Sherlock to decipher; we had already exchanged cards; each was aware of having seen and admired the other's pictures at the Independants, and so felt soon comfortably acquainted.

If you are a hardened—or, better, a case-hardened—voyager you may, with a little luck, travel on the Continent as comfortably third class as first. The qualification, of course, implies that you are not one of the very idle rich, who having the whole of life to waste can hardly bear to spend a few extra hours of it on the railway, who cannot bear to contemplate the passing scenery at any speed lower than the fastest possible. If, then, you are a traveller who eschews the *train de luxe*, you may often, I repeat, get as good comfort in the third as in the first, in spite of the hardness of the seats. And, at any rate, your third-class companions seldom suffer from fatty degeneration of the humanities, a disease grievously afflicting the more wealthy.

My companion was a fair-haired Swede—a thing at once obvious in his speech; he could not master the silky French *on*, and his *v*'s were all *f*'s. His name was Erik Lund, and he was a painter of some talent—indeed, one of the most promising amongst the younger Northerners as far as I knew of them. He was not tall, very squarely shaped: you could have drawn him all in straight lines without much caricature; and he had a nice open expression.

I judged him to be about thirty years of age. We were both bound for Barcelona, our dangling labels attested it without inquiry.

Yes, we got pretty well acquainted in a superficial way before the coffee had worn off, and I was able to snooze. We had found mutual acquaintances, for we had both lived in Paris and we had had mutual adventures, having both been to Spain previously. It is really odd how an experience of Spain brings people together—no other country, except perhaps Russia, is so effective as a breaker-down of reserve, none provides so much matter for gradually intensified conversation. And after we had slept, he on his bench, I on mine, we awoke of course almost intimate. A good sleep will do that for you, often.

We shared our food reserves, we went out foraging at stops, and before we had reached Cerbere we had put a lot of past history behind us. We talked, I may mention, in French. One thing I noticed and liked about him, he didn't bewilder me with dates. He wasn't one of those fellows who start a yarn with 'Now it was in nineteen-twelve that this happened! Or, wait a minute, wasn't it eleven? I think it must have been eleven, because . . . etc. . . . etc.' I loathe dates, and I get easily exasperated by daters.

Like all Northerners Erik Lund loved the South. He had drifted pretty nearly all over Spain, and some of the time he had lived almost by his wits. For a while he had joined a band of travelling showmen and had been their cashier. He had worked as a clerk in Almeria, and as a guide in Granada; he had also been a wandering cheap-jack artist, painting rapid quarter-hour sketches in public places and selling them by lottery at ten chances for the halfpenny. He roused my envy, for I had only clung to the more ordinary routes, and to an assured competence. At Port-Bou already I got entangled in his Bohemianism. A passing tout tossed a card through the window of our carriage. I picked it up. 'Posada and Hotel Trequerro,' I read out, 'cheap and convenient for travellers,' and then an address.

'Shall we try it?' asked Erik Lund.

'Do you know anything about the place?' I asked, astonished.

'Not a thing. It's near the docks. If we don't like it we can always quit. I like to take such chances.'

As we travelled always southwards he seemed to get more excited. Up till now he had preserved the phlegm of the Northman. I had imagined him going into his queer adventures with a certain stolidity, and I had amused myself picturing the contrast between

him and the Spanish vagabonds with whom he must have consorted. But I began to believe that this phlegm was only a covering, a dress worn naturally enough; but I could now imagine also that there was perhaps a naked man of a very different aspect underneath.

As we ran into the station of Gerona he said:

'Do you know, I was arrested at this place as a fowl thief. I had a hard time getting out too. I'll tell you. I used to live on the outskirts of the town; I had rooms in a farm with a friend. I was working pretty hard. I had some money then, not much, but just enough. Well, one night I was a bit distracted . . . there was a . . . there was a reason, and I found myself wandering about late at night out in the country, beyond the town. I told you that I was distracted, and do you know I couldn't tell you exactly how I got to the place I found myself in, or, to be exact, where I was. I'd been thinking of other things, and had drifted unwittingly. These Spanish nights and . . . and the other things tempt you to drift.

'I suddenly realised that it was late, and that I did not know the road home. But I saw nearby the lights of a farm, towards which I made my way, to ask for directions. Of course I was an idiot, and set off straight through an olive grove without thinking much about the proper front entrance. I expected to strike that easily enough. I also hoped that there weren't any dogs—in these peasant countries dogs can be the devil. Only Spaniards don't use them as much as other people because of the fear of rabies. Just as I was getting near the wall of the place, a couple of great hulking fellows suddenly jumped on to me from behind an olive tree. I was never so scared in my life. Bang! There I was flat on my face in the dry earth. It was lumpy and hard, and I got a mouthful of it. So there I lay eating dirt, while on my back these two unexpected louts were pounding and dragging and yelling like furies. I was too surprised to offer much resistance, and in no time I was triced up and was being dragged to the farm itself, not very gently either.

'I hadn't been in Spain so very long then, only some four or five months, and I don't learn languages very quickly. Also these brutes spoke Catalan. In no time I was the centre of a furious circle—men, old hags, women, girls, children, all howling and gritting at me, and beasts of boys pinching my legs. I couldn't make out a thing, but it was dramatic enough. And the flickering fire on the hearth and the one dim olive-oil lamp made it a hundred

times more dramatic. Quite dramatic enough for me, anyhow. I kept on saying, "Stranger, stranger. Don't understand Catalan." And at last they spoke in Castilian. But they had a ferocious dialect, and with difficulty at last I managed to make out two key words, *ladron* and *pollos*. They thought that I was a hen thief. I suppose they'd been losing hens lately and had lain in wait for the robber. I tried to explain, but my Spanish wasn't yet handy—indeed, it was a feeble fluttering thing that fled in almost every emergency. And, moreover, Spaniards always persist in misunderstanding a foreigner. Then I tried to make a joke. You see, I imagined at that time that the Spaniards were a sentimental, every-man-loves-a-lover sort of nation, and I thought that if I could explain they'd understand and sympathise. So I said, "Not hen thief, not hen thief, *ladron de corazon*, heart thief." And that made it worse. The only word they caught was thief, and they thought I was confessing. So they tied me up tighter than ever, and my legs too, and they pitched me into the muck of the stable to think things over. My word, the fleas!

'I hadn't meant to tell you the whole thing, but I think I will—if you don't mind; because that is why I'm coming back to Spain now.

'You see the actual reason was a girl. I've often wondered about it since. What is this love? Directly I saw her, or almost... within half an hour. I'd been taken to the Casino by a Spanish painter, friend of my friend; we'd all gone together. And she was sitting at a table near by with her family. You know the usual sort of Spanish family—fat father and monstrous mother, a mountain of a woman, and a withered aunt and kid of a brother dressed to kill, and there was a young squirt of a Spanish officer with them paying attentions. No, you can't imagine Lola at seventeen. Her eyes were like those little pools of magic ink that fortune-tellers spill in which you may read your fate, and she herself was the pure embodiment of that exquisite Spanish grace which you find—only too rarely. We were situated so that our glances couldn't help crossing. They crossed and left, and crossed again and were caught. She blushed and looked away, and I caught her staring at me in a mirror. We never looked at one another again, only at the mirror. But in half an hour I was wildly in love. And I'd never been in love before—nor since, not really. The other things are different.

'That's why I'm coming back. Do you know, I've never spoken to Lola. Not once in my life. I'll explain. You see, I could

never get at her. Her family looked after her like the devil. I saw her once or twice more at the Casino, and many times I passed her in the streets in an evening. We spoke with our eyes. We understood each other. Then I was introduced to a girl who knew Lola; and she spoke to me of Lola; and she spoke to Lola of me. But I couldn't get any introduction to Lola's family. They were standoffish folk. They wanted to get Lola married to the squit of an officer; but things hadn't been going so well lately. And at last they traced it to me, to this intruding heretic foreigner who had turned up, who had fascinated Lola with his yellow hair and his blue eyes. You know the sort of thing.

'On that night of the hens I had borrowed a guitar, and I had gone to serenade Lola. I could thrum a few chords, and I don't sing so badly, so I decided to give her a Swedish love-song. That would be different from these Spanish long-drawn laments; though serenades have gone out of fashion in Spain lately. Still, what did I care for the Spaniards? I knew which was her window, and I tuned up. I confess that that Swedish song, one of Bellman's, did sound odd in that Spanish *calle*. It didn't fit. It was too much the intrusive North. But presently I saw the window move, and very slowly Lola came out on to her balcony. She was dressed all in black, and I could only just perceive the glimmer of her face and hands in the darkness. My heart beat so that I couldn't finish the song: I broke down. But suddenly there was a noise on the balcony, Lola was dragged back and that old monster of a mother leaned over and screamed abuse at me. Oh, I can't describe that mother. What had she and Lola in common? She was jelly, held from dissolution by her corsets, and she always guzzled her food I know, and was congested in the face. But she could abuse. The narrow street echoed with it. Other casements were flung open, and I fled. But what did I care? Lola had dropped me a white rose.

'I gave the guitar back to its owner; he was a barber. And half-crazy with love I wandered off as I've told you, and so got arrested for hen stealing, and lay amongst the fleas trying to think of Lola; but the fleas and Lola wouldn't think well together at once; and I'd lost my rose in the scrimmage. It was out there in the olive grove, somewhere, trampled into the ground. I tell you, it's a test, seriously. If you can think dearly of your loved one while you're tied hand and foot painfully and eaten with fleas, then that love is genuine. I believe that I was able to think of

Lola for quite a half of the night. Don't smile. I don't need to convince myself, I want to convince you. People are so sceptical about real love.

'Next day the *guardia-civiles* came along and dragged me off, and a whole hooting crowd followed me. I was angry. I thought that if this thing came out, there would be no chance of making good with Lola's people. No chance at all.

'They pitched me into a lock-up. Of course I had no papers, and that made it worse. One didn't carry passports then, but there was some registration formula I hadn't complied with. I was simply a non-existent vagrant to them. But at last, with great difficulty, I did bribe a message through to the Swede I was living with, an artist also. And he brought our Spanish painter friends to my aid; but they couldn't get me out, they only spread the yarn around the town. So I had a night in the gaol, and was devoured by bugs that time. But my friend had gone off to Barcelona and got the Swedish consul, and so on the next day I was released. Without apologies.

'There was a feast on that day, and the folks were dancing in the streets. In the evening I went out again to look for Lola. I expected that her parents would have been more jealously watching over her, but they thought that I was safely locked up, for of course they had heard about the hen affair—everybody had. Of course they knew that I wasn't a hen thief, but that made little difference. They had rejoiced that I was safe for the time being. So by luck I found Lola with some girl friends, not too close under her parents' eyes. I went up to her as bold as anything, and gave her a bow. She uttered a little glad cry and held out her hands. But my Spanish had all fled. I couldn't utter one word: and I knew better than to speak in Swedish or French. It would have sounded comic to her. So I offered her silently my arm, and we slid into the dance. But the girls ran off to give the alarm, and in a few minutes, long before my panicked Spanish had come back, Lola was wrested away from me by the furious and purple-faced father.

'Then they whisked Lola off to Barcelona. I wandered about the streets of Gerona for days wondering what had become of her. I stood under her balcony for whole nights, hoping for some sign, and after a week or more learned only by luck; so, off I went myself to Barcelona. Lola's parents also owned a house in Barcelona, and I soon discovered it. Well, to cut a long story short, at last I instituted a regular correspondence with her. I was afraid to send

letters, or even to bribe a servant. Such things go wrong at the critical moment, but I fixed up a regular plot. There was an old art dealer with whom I had got very friendly, and he agreed to help me. Then I persuaded the girl friend from Gerona to come up on a visit to Barcelona to give Lola a message. Do you know how I communicated with Lola? On fans. I painted fans, and wrote minute messages into the garlands, and so on. Lola pretended to buy the fans from the old art dealer. And she would write her answer on the back of the fan and would leave it behind in the shop, or return it as unsatisfactory. The plan worked splendidly, but it was rather expensive. I found an old public letter-writer who helped me with my messages. I had reckoned that so much love slipped between his fingers per annum that he would be blasé, but he took his fee and showed some interest. He had even a touch of poetry in him, professional poetry maybe, and he made some of my uncouth sentences sparkle before he had done with them; but poetry is easy for a Spaniard. He is nourished on it.

'It came to this in the end. Lola thought that if I could get together enough pictures to hold an exhibition, and to make some sort of success with it in Barcelona, that her parents might relent enough to admit me to the house. Of course there was also the heretic question, but that could perhaps be shelved for a time. So I set to work like fury. Luckily Johanssen and I had been thinking of the possibilities of an exhibition, and this idea of Lola only spurred me on. But I thought out a great effort to tickle Barcelona. I would paint a huge picture of St. George, the patron saint of the town. So I spent almost all my remaining money on the hire of a large studio, on the purchase of an enormous canvas and the necessary paints. I tell you, I worked like a fiend. But I still found the time and, what was more, the energy to keep up my fans and their correspondence with Lola. And yet never a spoken word had passed between us. I had indeed heard the sound of her voice: it was like . . . it was like . . . but, aha, I am no poet. My old letter-writer would have given you a dozen similes, trite ones, perhaps, yet conveying more than the cold sense. . . .

'We arranged our date of exhibition with a little gallery, and duly opened it. My St. George took up one whole wall. The rest of the space Johanssen and I shared out between us. Now I haven't mentioned, have I, that that young officer had followed Lola to Barcelona. He had. When we encountered one another on La Rambla we looked at one another from head to foot. We blazed

mutual scorn and contempt. I rather think that he had the best of that duel, I couldn't take him seriously enough—he was too much of a dandy. He wore rings all over his fingers. Pah! With what anxiety did I wait for the press, for the journalistic notices that were to lead me to Lola!

'Unbelievable, my dear fellow. Atrocious! Scandalous! They were not even biting; they were tepid, lukewarm. Johanssen was praised; I was patted. "Go on, little fellow, with time you will be better." "This not altogether unpromising pupil of the Señor Johanssen," one called me. I tell you what I found out later. The critics had all been suborned by that officer. Lola had let it leak, or I had let it leak. I don't know which. Perhaps it was me, myself. I was crushed. I was crushed in more ways than one. My money was almost at an end. I could not hold up my artistic head any longer in Barcelona. It was a regular knife in the back. I knew that some of my pictures were good. And I was as far away from Lola as ever, and almost penniless.

'I painted for Lola one last fan. A tragic fan—a fan of farewell, and I ran away. It was the only thing to do. I could not hang on chewing defeat, disgrace, and penury at once. I drifted deeper into Spain, caring little what became of me. I went here, there, like a boat without a rudder. . . . Hallo! Here we come to Barcelona. Look, look over there! That's where Lola lives. You see that white block of houses over there with gardens. . . .'

II.

The *posada* to which Erik Lund led me was so simple that I would never have ventured to try it alone. On the ground floor was a huge vaulted place, part bar, part cellar, part eating-house. Huge barrels were stacked in the whitewashed interior—a drinking counter occupied one corner, dining-tables were set on the flags, and the masonry of the walls and buttresses was stout enough for the foundations of a castle. It had that absolute contempt for comfort which marks the veritable South. Our cool, almost clammy bedroom was not very private, as another bedroom lay beyond it—a bedroom occupied by a married couple, so that our dressing processes were always liable to interruption by the young woman, who came and went with the greatest nonchalance. I had gathered at supper from Lund that he had heard in Paris, by mere chance, from some Barcelona painter, that the Señorita Lola Planas was yet

unmarried. 'And beautiful as ever,' said Lund. 'So I've come back. I don't fear her people now. I'm older. More experienced. I've not done so badly of late. For no matter what sort of a life I've led, I've never stopped loving Lola.'

He was up early next day and off exploring. I met him again at supper. He was radiant.

'I've not seen Lola,' he said, 'but I've seen her mother from a distance. Do you know, that old fat hippopotamus didn't look a day older. Wonderful. Of course she was some way off. But I'd have said she looked younger if anything.'

On the next day we were walking along La Rambla together. The florists' stalls were an echo of his mood. Suddenly he gripped my arm.

'There,' he cried, 'in that automobile. Do you see? That's Lola's mother.'

I had a momentary vision of a very fat, rather flamboyant woman in a very expensive stream-line car.

'Not a day older,' said Lund, in an amazed voice. 'How she wears! But then, of course,' he reflected, 'there are all sorts of beauty dodges these days. Time stands still for women. I'll go and call this very afternoon. Yes, I will.'

I was detained late that evening. But on reaching home I found that Lund had not come back.

'Lucky devil,' I thought, as I turned in, 'I suppose he's reaping the reward of fidelity.'

I expected to be awakened by a tumultuous return, but slept through peacefully till the morning. I was then awoken by the passage of the husband through my bedroom, and I came gradually to myself to realise that Lund had not come home at all.

It was only while I was dressing that I realised that all his baggage had gone also. He had decamped.

'That's odd,' I said to myself in the looking-glass, as I was shaving—'that's odd. Now why the dickens has he bolted?'

As I was having my breakfast of coffee and *bunuelos* the host, fat, black-moustached, and rather greasy, in shirt-sleeves, lounged towards me.

'The Swedish señor has gone,' he growled; 'he left last night, but wrote this card for your honour.'

I took it. Lund's writing sprawled. It was not easy to decipher. In fact, I only made out a word here and there; it had evidently been written in great haste.

'It was not Lola's . . . ' I could translate from the writing, which forthwith trailed off into hieroglyphics. Then I got what looked like 'terrible,' but might have been something else. And finally the words 'am writing later.'

III.

His explanatory letter followed me about the country, and it was nearly a month before I had a clue to his strange behaviour. I give the letter in full; it was better written, but not always quite legible. However, I was always able to deduce a word which would fit more or less the undecipherable scrawl. I have translated from his original and not always grammatical French, but I have attempted no reproduction of his linguistic peculiarities. It would but complicate things:

'SOLLER DE MALLORCA.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,

'You must have been astonished at my sudden departure, and I now fear that the card I left for you, hasty and ill-written, may not have been explicit enough to have properly excused my rudeness. I would not like you to think me lacking in courtesy to one who has shown himself so sympathetic as yourself. For a second time I have fled from Barcelona and from Lola. Yes, I have fled from Lola. Or, rather . . . but wait.

'I went to her house indeed, as I told you I was going to do, and after some parley I was admitted; there seemed to be some *malentendu* about the name. I waited for a time, and then that large woman whom I had pointed out to you in the auto came out to meet me. I saw at once then that she was not Lola's mother, though like her; so I bowed formally to her.

"I am looking for the Señorita Lola Planas."

"There is no Señorita Lola," she began; then suddenly her voice changed. "*Dios!* Who are you?"

"I had formerly an acquaintanceship with the señorita," I answered. "I call myself Erik Lund."

"Erik Lund," she said—"Erik Lund! Then you will be his son."

"His son?" I said, a little irritated. "Certainly not, señora. Why should I be his son? Why should I be the son to myself?"

She came nearer and stared at me. There seemed to be a something of terror in her eyes.

"But," she cried—"impossible. It is such a long time—oh! a whole lifetime away . . . twenty years at least."

‘She seemed a very hysterical sort of a woman. And yet, you know, she was right there. I really hadn’t taken much account of the passing of time. And, *mon Dieu*, it *was* twenty years. I was amazed. I had drifted along in life ; my mind, my time, filled with work. That love-affair with Lola had somehow seemed always a thing of the present. It had not aged a day. I haven’t aged much myself, so I suppose that time doesn’t count with me so much as it does with others. I don’t look nearly forty-one, and that is a fact, anyway.

“‘But, señor,” the woman was saying, “it isn’t—no, it isn’t possible. Blessed Mother of God, it isn’t true.”

“‘Nevertheless, señora,” I said, “it is true enough. I have come all the way from Paris to see the Señorita Lola.”

“‘To see the Señorita Lola,” she repeated like a parrot ; “to see Lola. Oh, *Madre Mia* ! To see Lola, did you say ? ”

“‘I said so,” I answered impatiently.

‘There was a minute’s silence. Then she laughed, and there was a jarring sound in her voice.

“‘Well then, señor,” she said, “I’ll tell you. You cannot see Lola.”

“‘Why not ? ” I asked. “I am fairly well to do now. I can offer her a respectable establishment.”

‘You see I thought I’d better be reasonable. Spaniards are quite business-like in some ways. But she laughed again.

“‘A respectable establishment,” she sneered. “It is very . . . very touching, señor, and very romantic. One would almost have said you were a Spaniard. Yet no. A Spaniard would not have remembered. And yet I repeat . . . I repeat, señor, you cannot see Lola. And now, for God’s sake, señor, go away. Please leave this house . . . and as quickly as possible.”

“‘But I insist on seeing Lola,” I cried. “I have heard that she is yet unmarried.”

“‘You heard that ? ” she asked wonderingly, “and for that you came ? Mother of God, you are a Quixote. Well, you were lied to, señor. I tell you Lola *is* married, and she has had eleven children since. I repeat, you cannot see her. No, no, you cannot. And now, for the sake of the Blessed Virgin, go away, and go quickly.”

‘Well, I went. Those eleven children were an effectual smack in the face of my romanticism. Fancy—twenty years ! And I have never reckoned them as more than five or six . . . eight, perhaps. Why hadn’t I gone back before ? I don’t know. I had hardly thought it possible to go back. But hearing from that lying fool in Paris that she was yet unmarried had awoken my imagination. Eleven children ! No ! Lola with eleven ! My imagination tottered. I went dazed.

'And then I turned back. Outside that house I stopped a maid-servant. I said to her :

"Who lives in that house now ?"

"That is the house of the Colonel Gia," she answered.

"But it used to belong to the family Planas."

"*Claro*," said the girl. "Señora Planas is the wife of the Colonel. The son died."

'Then I remembered that Gia had been the name of that undersized bejewelled officer whom I had so hated, who had bribed the journalists. So he had won ; and he had had eleven children.

'I have a retentive memory, though perhaps I am a little slow in an immediate deduction. And it was only later, sitting in a café, trying to gather together the shreds of my suddenly burst romance, that I began visually to reconstruct that shattering interview. At the moment itself I had been too occupied with my own point of view, with my own desire, with my own exasperation, too consumedly egoistic to take much account of the behaviour of the señora. But now that I could more calmly, more detachedly, look back over the thing I began to be more and more struck by her agitation, by her strangeness of manner. Of course, as I have described it to you, I have drawn it from memory, not exactly in the way I understood it at the very first moment.

'Then a suspicion crept upon me—a suspicion that possibly you have already jumped to. That woman, that fat, unwieldy person who so terribly reminded me of the grotesque mother of twenty years back—no—it wasn't possible. It wasn't Lola herself. It wasn't. It wasn't, I repeat. I have *never* spoken to Lola.

'Or was it a cry of despairing realisation when she said "You cannot see Lola" ? Did she mean not that I would be prevented from seeing Lola, but that I was incapable—blind ?

'No, no, a thousand times no.

'I may be an incurable romantic. I refuse to believe that that woman was Lola—if you had ever seen Lola you would know why. The two persons are incompatible. I refuse. Do you remember a definition of faith that you jestingly gave me ? Well, I cling to that kind of faith. I do believe something which I—must I say ?—know—well, then, which I know not to be true. I believe that Lola, like myself, is almost unchanged. I believe that twenty years have passed over her head and that she is still the embodiment of the image enshrined in my memory. For what would Lola be if she were *not* that ? She would be nothing. No, she would be less than nothing, she would have never existed. And then what did I love ? Did I love nothingness and futility ? Have I spent the best part of myself on an illusion ? You see, I cannot believe those things.

I must believe the other. That is clear, isn't it? I have wiped these last few days out of my memory, or I will wipe them out. I will go on loving the Lola of the past. Perhaps—who knows?—it was luckier for a man like me, an idiotic idealist, that I have never had to live with any other than with a phantom. At least illusion brings no disillusion. And yet, I have fled.

'I sat in that café, stunned, for a full hour. And then wildly I ran away from Barcelona. The town was hateful to me. Now I am here in this quiet spot, surrounded by strange mountains, deep in the olive groves and orange trees. These olives, they say, are the oldest in the world. They make me feel humble and resigned. How many illusions have they seen bear fruit beneath their contorted trunks? How many countless generations of illusions have they seen, monotonous, identical? And how many disillusiones? *Mon Dieu!*

'You will say I am turning poet or cynic. Well. Good-bye. I am going to work. Do not think of me as one who has lost something. I have lived twenty years already—yes, twenty years it is after all—with Lola; I can go on with that dream for the bit longer, for now I know her full value. I can never suffer disillusion from *her*.

'Think of me sometimes.

'ERIK LUND.'

Yes, I think of him sometimes. But whenever my mind goes back to that episode it lingers more on the other protagonist. I have no need of Lund's kind of faith. I am not hampered by the bonds of memory. And so I wonder what was in that woman's soul when she cried 'You cannot see Lola.' Was it a real forbidding? was it the cry of a past passion torn brutally from its grave? or was it merely the clamour of vanity? And what price had she paid? Had she quickly forgotten the mere fascination of a girl; had she buried all feeling under an easy surrender to a series of mild self-indulgences, such as eating and child-bearing, or had she deeply suffered? Was her dainty past or her grotesque present the truer index to herself? I ask myself such questions without expectation of answer. But, nevertheless, the half-hinted, even if insoluble, holds always more play for the imagination than that which has been already quite revealed.

UNIVERSITY LIFE AFTER 1790.

AN old man was once revisiting Cambridge after an absence of some ten or a dozen years, and called at a house in Brookside. 'Is Mr. So-and-so in?' he asked. The maid who answered the door replied 'Mr. So-and-so? He's dead.' 'Dead,' muttered the old man, 'dead . . . dead! They're all dead now, damn 'em!' His words were not intended to bear any eschatological ill-will; they were only a variation of the old theme of *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis*. And in few other spheres has there been a more marked change during the last hundred years or so than in our older Universities.

It is difficult and often arbitrary to divide any kind of history into periods, but the event which has had perhaps the most epoch-making effects in University history was the Royal Commission of 1858, and especially in its provision that marriage should no longer be a disqualification for tenure of a fellowship, an innovation which gave new intellectual and ethical standards, and was to have a far-reaching influence on University life.

The *locus classicus* for the great days of bachelor Cambridge is in the pages of Gunning, who at the age of eighty began to compile reminiscences of the community in which his whole life had been spent. They were published in 1854, posthumously, and, reprinted for the last time the next year, might well bear a fresh and concentrated edition now.

When Henry Gunning was elected to the Esquire Bedellship his colleague informed him that his duties would be twofold—to execute the statutes by violating them, and to carve well at table. 'As a parasite at the tables of many Vice-chancellors,' says Mr. Gray, 'he had unusual opportunities for picking up gossip, and he spent the virtuous evening of a long life in raking up malicious tales of dead hosts and fellow-convives.' But for one practice he is to be commended: 'although I usually went to bed late, I never suffered myself to sleep until I had passed in review the whole of what I had read in the day and evening,' and we may suppose that his review also included all he had heard and seen at table and elsewhere, an example one resolves every January to emulate.

In his preface he dwells with unctuous satisfaction on the thought that the time when he was up (he was a freshman at Christ's in 1784) was with the exception of the six or seven years preceding the very worst part of our history. 'Drunkenness being the besetting sin, I need scarcely add that many other vices followed in its train.' 'Time does not seem to have dulled the edge of his memory nor, in spite of his protestations, to have made him more kindly disposed towards those from whom he disagreed. He gloats over the piety of friends still living, and with equal measure discovers the youthful failings of enemies long dead.'

In those days fellowships, clerical or lay, were assigned to counties, and when gained financed cessation from intellectual effort. They were terminated only by death or matrimony, so that a man ultimately resigned himself either to a hard-drinking bachelorhood, or else to a wife—and a country rectory, when there was no mastership or professorship available. Work involving any degree of real scholarship was left for the extra-collegiate coaches, who also examined, and from whom examination results, and even the highest honours, could be obtained at a price, under cover of a fee for private tuition.

Such lectures as were given did not begin till term divided, and were but a pleasant way of drowsing away the interval between breakfast and lunch. Sometimes indeed they were combined with feeding. It was not unknown for Harwood to pack an audience for a lecture by means of a double invitation, and for his guests to have served up to them at table the fish they had previously seen dissected.

Parkinson of Christ's was in love with a young lady living at Kennett, near Newmarket. Consequently, with his gown ill concealing boots and spurs and his servant waiting outside with a horse, he frequently delivered his lectures with some haste, and would close with a recommendation to the students to come to his next lecture better prepared. At last Gunning became disheartened with the difficulties he met, and annoyed with Parkinson's contemptuous way of treating his inquiries, determined to give up reading altogether. 'Finding this to be the case, for I frankly told him of my intention, he released me from attending his lectures the remainder of the term, remarking that I could doubtless pass my time more pleasantly and perhaps more profitably in my own rooms.' Perhaps he could, but he may thereby have missed gems of scurrilous criticism of other dons. Thorp, Tutor of St. Catharine's,

was lecturing on the Law of Extreme Necessity. 'Suppose,' he said, 'Lowther Yates and I were struggling in the water for a plank which would not hold two, and that I got possession of it, I should be justified in knocking him off . . .'; and then he added with great vehemence, 'Damn him, and I would too, without the slightest hesitation!' One still living once interrupted a speaker who addressed the chair 'Mr. Perkins, and gentlemen' with 'And a very proper distinction.' The man thus complimented retaliated later with 'If — doesn't go to hell, there's no such place.' Criticism, even critical abuse of other scholars is not yet unknown, but in our lecture-rooms we try to keep it apart from the personal.

After years of such experience, and presumably decline, these men would become qualified to fill the highest positions in the University. Even medicine was powerless to redeem. It is told of a certain Master of Caius that 'he was extremely fond of his profession, and had he given his undivided attention to it would undoubtedly have risen to great eminence; but he had an objection to being called up at night, nor did he like to visit patients early in the morning,' the human doctor! It is when face to face with evil in the high places that the old man's criticisms are most trenchant. He records of a Professor of Mineralogy, 'His lecture-room was always crowded, and those of his hearers who were not deeply versed in mineralogy came away highly delighted,' and of Professor Christian, 'he died in 1823, in the full vigour of his incapacity.'

If thinking was plain, living was commensurately high. The affection which men now devote to their work and to their homes was then reserved for the pleasures of the table. On Degree Night it was the custom at Christ's for the Bachelors to give a supper to the Fellows: 'a handsome supper was provided, immense bowls of punch were emptied, and every one was compelled to sing a song or drink an enormous glass of liquor by way of penalty.' When a Vice-chancellor was the host, his 'public dinners were very merry ones, but his private ones were quite uproarious.' Those were the days when, on the testimony of both Gunning and Marshal's 'History of Herefordshire,' it was no unusual thing for a man to put his lips to a wooden bottle of cider containing four quarts, and not remove them till he had emptied it; and when Montagu and his friend could walk to Huntingdon to catch the Lincoln coach, carrying by turns a Stilton cheese. Appetites were literally insatiable. The Reverend Mr. Collier could naïvely declare: 'When last in Town, I was going to dine with a friend, and passed through a small court,

just as a lad was hanging up a board, on which was this tempting inscription: "A roast pig this instant set upon the table." The invitation was irresistible; I ordered a quarter. It was very delicate and very delicious. I despatched a second and a third portion, but was constrained to leave one quarter behind, as my dinner hour was approaching and my friend was remarkably punctual.' Such as this could hold its own against the story of Savarin and the thirty-six dozen oysters.

At Stourbridge Fair the University let itself go. The Vice-chancellor, Bedells, Registry and Taxors assembled at the Senate House for 'mulled wine and sherry in black bottles, with a great variety of cakes. Of these they partook as heartily as if they had come without their breakfasts or were apprehensive of going without their dinners.' Proceeding by carriage to the Fair, they drew up to the Tiled Booth for the dispatch of business, also of oysters. Here the distinguished academics dealt with several barrels of oysters, with ale and bottled porter in great profusion, off bare boards laid upon trestles and casks. The next visit was to the Dining Room, of which Gunning shall speak: 'The scene which presented itself I can describe most accurately, for the dishes and their arrangement never varied. Before the Vice-chancellor was placed a large dish of herrings; then followed in order a neck of pork roasted, an enormous plum pudding, a leg of pork boiled, a pease pudding, a goose, a huge apple pie, and a round of beef in the centre. On the other half of the table the same dishes were placed in similar order, the herrings before the Senior Proctor, who sat at the bottom. From thirty to forty persons dined there, and although the wine was execrable, a number of toasts were given and mirth and good humour prevailed.'

Manners generally were of a more than healthy broadness. In the days when hotel windows served as visitors' books, cards were viewed as a suspicious 'over-refinement by the generality of the students, who, when they made a call, knocked a piece of mortar out of the wall with the key of their room, and with this scrawled their names on the doors of their friends. Some were refined enough to carry a piece of chalk in their pockets.' Wash basins were emptied out of the window. One torrent happened to coincide with Dr. Glynn, who remonstrated with creditable dignity, his plight considered: 'The contents of a wash basin, did you say? Well, well. . . . I feared it had been worse. But mind, my master, never do the like again.' Practical jokes were considered funny.

Witness the story of the sanguine young man whose lottery prize of £20 was forged into £2000; or of Jemmy Gordon, whose appeal to the Master of Trinity, 'I hope, my Lord, you will give me a shilling,' was countered with 'If you can find me a greater scoundrel than yourself I will give you half a crown.' Whereupon he went away, told one Beverly his presence was required by the Bishop, and escorting him from behind: 'I think, my Lord, I am entitled to the half-crown.'

Another diversion lay in the courting of heiresses, a feat often regarded also in the light of a practical joke. A man would stake all his savings, and at times those of other people as well, on creating a good show, as often as not to be refused when no academic preferment came. Otherwise the regular means of financing matrimony was sought in the Church. No doubt many men took Holy Orders through conviction; but a great number of Ordinations were at the beginning at all events more commercially orientated. Theology was at a correspondingly low ebb. When the Archbishop of York hinted to a candidate for Deacon's Orders 'in the most courteous manner, that he hoped when he applied for Priest's Orders he should find the interval had been employed in studying divinity, the reply was, that since his degree he had been employed in more important studies. This answer, offensive in itself, was much aggravated by the haughty tone in which it was uttered; the consequence was that he was sent back without obtaining Deacon's Orders.' Adkin of Corpus, after trying all other lines to no purpose, was able to carry negotiations a little further. 'With the Chaplain he passed muster, and with his assistance was able to construe three or four verses, which, he said, it was probable he would be required to do by the Bishop. "His Lordship, putting a testament in my hand," said Tom, "pointed out a passage in one of the Gospels, consisting of the three verses I had learned. I construed two verses most successfully, when unfortunately I dropped the book; and though I construed the remaining verse equally well, as ill luck would have it, I did not find the right chapter on re-opening the book, which the Bishop perceiving, recommended me to come better prepared at his next Ordination. Thus," added he, "perished all my hopes of preferment in the Church, owing not to my ignorance but to my awkwardness; for had it not been for this misfortune, I should undoubtedly have been an Irish Bishop."'

When instituted, the incumbent would often continue to join in the social life of Cambridge, and in his own sphere did pretty

much as he pleased. When a wet Sunday prevented his arrival for the week's work, 'Dr. Drop' did duty. Once in Lincolnshire a visiting parson wrote informing the warden that he would hold a service over and above the usual complement of one a month, to the great consternation of the parish clerk, who was filling in the gap with an otherwise well-timed sitting of turkeys in the pulpit. Another incumbent sold two or three hundred loads of earth, with the special commendation that 'the earth would be particularly valuable, owing to the bones mixed with it.'

Preaching had fallen upon no less evil days, and conduct in church was incredible. The accounts of the Burwell sermons, which form an excellent illustration of the conduct of divine service during the period, have now become classics. On Mid-Lent Sunday the Vice-chancellor preached in the morning at Burwell, after which he, his staff and the vicar repaired to a tenant's for luncheon. One year the vicar put on a sermon in the afternoon for the benefit of the Vice-chancellor, and when after several fruitless attempts to make him rise he ultimately left unaccompanied, the host tactlessly remarked that a sermon in the afternoon was unusual. The Vice-chancellor asked: 'What sort of preacher is Mr. Turner?' To which the tenant replied: 'For my own part, I would not go over the threshold to hear him preach.' 'If that be your opinion, who have frequent opportunities for hearing him,' said Dr. Gretton, 'I am of your opinion too; and we will remain and have a few more glasses of your fine old port.'

The sequel on a previous occasion must be quoted in full. 'The excellence of the tenant's ale was apparent, not only in the red faces of the Vicar, the Clerk and the Sexton, but also in the vigour with which two or three officials, furnished with white staves, exercised them whenever they found any of the children inattentive. Not content with shewing their authority over the younger part of the congregation, one of them inflicted so heavy a blow on the head of a young man who was sleeping, that it resounded through the church. The person thus distinguished started up, and rubbing his head, had the mortification to find all his neighbours laughing at his expense; to use a fancy phrase, he shewed fight, and I believe he was only restrained by the presence of the Vice-chancellor (who rose to see what was the matter) from giving the peace officer a hearty drubbing.'

Not but that sometimes a man, after having his fling at Cambridge, would settle down, take Orders, and lead a life of respected

domesticity and devotion to his parochial duties, while it must be remembered that Farmer, the Master of Emmanuel, was twice offered a bishopric by Pitt, and twice did he refuse it, through a feeling of inadequacy, confessing afterwards that he would have made 'a very indifferent Bishop.' *O si sic omnes!*

Colleges were more like endowed clubs than seminaries of sound learning and religious education. Relations between dons and undergraduates were mainly negative, and that through there being no undergraduates. At one period when Gunning was keeping his terms there was but one other at Christ's. In days when a Bishop would on his rare visits enter his castle in a carriage and four, followed by his wife in a carriage and pair, masters of Colleges, often absentee Bishops themselves, would dwell in light equally unapproachable. It is said that no undergraduate had ever been personally addressed by Worsley, whose horses within the memory of living man were kept in Downing Paddock. Not even discipline brought them together: men could ride horses around the court of Sidney or light a bonfire in Trinity Hall without a censure or investigation. And yet we must remember that Latham willed that at his funeral the undergraduates of the Hall should be regaled not with sherry from his cellars at the Lodge, but with the best sherry at Southacre.

As might be expected in a society thus constituted, servants played an important and often a devoted part. Sal Elvedge, the thirsting bedder who would lap up the jug of stale spirits from Harwood's specimens, laid up for her overnight in the gyp room, which she in ignorance said she found so good for her colic, would compare favourably with her latest descendants who walk out in silk stockings, even carrying their perquisite bread (and it is whispered other things) in a closed attaché case. We lack too the devotion of Bob Foster, hairdresser to Dr. Farmer, another Master of Emmanuel, who told his master with great enthusiasm how he had just defended him from the charge of not being fit to carry guts to a bear by insisting that he was. And only in the last few weeks has the death been recorded of Day, servant to Jack Perkins, Bursar of Downing, Secretary to the Cambridgeshire Hunt, and a gentleman to whom justice is not done in the stories, many of them apocryphal, which survive, or in the silence generally accorded to him in books of reminiscences. Bardolph said on hearing of the death of his master: 'I would I were with him wheresoever he is: whether he be in heaven or hell.' There was no such doubt about

Perkins, who one day addressed his servant : ' Ah, Day, the time is soon coming when I shall have to go to one place or the other.' To which the reply was : ' Well, sir, if you go the college will go too.'

It was a broad, coarse age, inevitable in a community of bachelors with moderate means and little occupation, when a Reverend Bursar of Trinity could make the unfortunate mistake of accosting the Master's wife. And yet for all its bestiality, it was in many ways pleasantly spacious, generous and liberal. Even war was a game played according to the rules, and the line between players and spectators was strictly observed. In the middle of the Napoleonic wars Castley of Jesus was able to 'partake of the gaieties which Paris afforded' and to make the grand tour of Europe. In an appeal over an election to a fellowship at the Hall, Terence, Quintilian, Horace, Virgil, Tacitus, Juvenal, Martial, Cicero and Ovid were quoted for the meaning of a word. Even Jemmy Gordon, most riotous of men, who 'sang a good song and told a good story,' also 'had Horace at his fingers' ends and was in the habit of quoting him with considerable effect.'

Hospitality as well as gluttony was the order of the day. When means were narrow, the noblest mind the best contentment had. At Courtenay's apartment in London, 'our only repast was a Welsh rabbit and a bottle of porter, and his conversation was the dessert.' At dinners there was a certain grandeur wholly lacking in modern hen-cocktail-parties. Once when Dr. Ogden was dining with the High Steward, the butler poured out pale brandy in mistake for champagne. Dr. Ogden raised his glass to his lips and emptied it. His Lordship expressed surprise that he had not noticed the mistake, to which the Doctor replied : 'I did not remark upon it to you, my Lord, because I felt it my duty to take whatever you thought fit to offer, if not with pleasure at least in silence.' Even the Doctor's rebukes were delivered in a gentlemanly manner and in one free of offence. When the mistress of the house asked him his opinion of a dish of ruffs and reeves which were rather underdone : 'They are admirable, madam,' he replied, 'raw ; what must they have been had they been roasted !'

Then there is the story of Dr. Parr, which breathes the gentleness of Charles Lamb. One day when he was out walking with a friend, it suddenly came on to rain, and both became wet through to the skin. They adjourned to the friend's house, where Dr. Parr was fitted with a scratch wardrobe while his own clothes dried at the

we
cla
to
to
futi
thre
fello
soci
with
was
his s
to a l
auth
certai
tende
intens
and t
stead
uniform
is to b
engage
ledge
VOL

kitchen fire. Pleasing savours began to penetrate into the room where they were; whereupon Dr. Parr said with his accustomed lisp, and more than usual satisfaction: 'How very kind of you, my dear friend, to remember my love for roothe goothe!' His host knew there was no such thing on the menu, and on going into the kitchen to investigate, perceived the Doctor's wig smoking at the fire.

Indeed, in that innocent age the Inspector of Taxes would lie down with the kid. When the Income Tax was first passed, Horne Tooke's return was 'Nothing.' He was surcharged as a matter of course, and on being asked by the Commissioners how he could contrive to live in a good house, and entertain his friends, giving an excellent dinner every Sunday, which could not be done on an income of under £60 a year, he replied: 'There are three ways of doing it, begging, borrowing, or stealing. By which of these three methods I manage to live upon so small an income it is for your worships to find out.'

The Cambridge scene is now changed from the days when snipe were shot in Downing Terrace and Coe Fen. Its dead middle-class houses stretch in almost unbroken continuity from Stapleford to Milton; the haphazard grouping of laboratories on what used to be Downing Park stands as a monument to the soullessness and futility of syndicate planning; even the existence of Coe Fen is threatened. And the life of the place is no less novel.

The poor scholar of the Middle Ages is returned, ousting the fellow commoner who could and would repay his college for the social amenities it had afforded by presenting it on his departure with a piece of plate. But whereas the mediaeval undergraduate was content to pursue learning for its own sake, enduring poverty, his successor only looks upon his course at Cambridge as a means to a lucrative occupation. As often as not he is bribed by municipal authorities to come. In any case he is intent upon reaching a certain qualifying standard within a prescribed period. The tendency of the reforms of the Royal Commission is towards the intensification of this average. The man who came both to offer and to reap purely social advantages is to be eliminated: in his stead colleges are to be filled with men of a strictly middle-class uniformity. This atmosphere of a state-inspected technical college is to be maintained in the Dons, a staff of middle-class bureaucrats engaged and pensioned according to rigid scales to purvey knowledge up or down to the requisite standard, and whose homes

laudably enough command at least as much of their affection as their colleges. The result is a commercial earnestness pervading University life.

The prevalence of the married don tends to divert the centre of social life from the College Hall to Grange Road. Where there is no statutorily or morally compulsory attendance at High Table at regular intervals, say once a week, members often remain unseen by their colleagues and entirely unknown to their undergraduates. But socially, junior and senior members are a more homogeneous body than in the past hundred years. The seriousness in intellectual aims, the same devotion to the ideal of family life, actual or potential, and even a kinship in straitened finances give them a firm basis for unity and interaction. The don now reads his paper to succeeding generations of undergraduate societies, assists at their nocturnal discussions, in which the universe is reduced to order and the Almighty and the Conservative Government disposed of over cigarettes and tepid coffee. He interests himself in the young men's games, and where possible joins actively in them. High feeding and deep drinking are generally on the decline, the moderns being educated to employ their leisure to better advantage.

When one turns to recent books of reminiscences of Cambridge one cannot help being struck by a consistent tameness and mediocrity in the life portrayed. Not even Oscar Browning complaining that after six months' work on his 'History of the World' he had not got farther than the reign of George IV, and turning an Athanasian front against an unjust world, or Arthur Benson indulging in introspection and occasional rudeness, or describing how the Provost of Eton swore softly and monosyllabically when locked out of his rooms after Chapel can suggest that life is as full-blooded as in the days of our fathers and in the old time before them. As Erasmus complained of Queens' College, 'the beer is small and windy.'

But it is a stock theme of the praiser of time past that there are no longer any so-called 'characters' abroad: and one wonders how much reputations have become enhanced with the passing of years. There are many alive at the present moment who could compile a volume for publication in 1977 which would be as lively as Gunning, even if not so coarse. It might include stories of the lecturer who, in exasperation at the unruliness of his audience, left prematurely, spluttering 'All right; give the damned lecture yourselves, then,' and who on another occasion repeated an experiment involving an explosion which had previously failed, to be greeted

at the psychological moment with a defunct chicken held up at the back of the room, and 'Your bird, sir, I think.' A neighbouring college might contribute some of the perennial and friendly banter of its Tutors: 'When we were boys together; at least, I was'; the description of a well-known eccentric as '—, gone to the good'; and perhaps the identity of 'the unknown Etonian.' We are glad and honoured to have still among us the lawyer who towards the close of a lingering meeting answered the secretary's oft-repeated request for the date with 'It is still the fifteenth,' and who has enriched the history of the Union Debates by countering a sweeping condemnation of his side of the House by an opponent as 'uncircumcised Philistines' by 'the honourable and I presume circumcised member.' Modern conditions evoke a different setting in stories, but there is no less wit nor humour. It is not long since that a distinguished professor was impressed by his wife to lend an air of respectability to an Agricultural Society dance (a by-product of Co-educational Cambridge); and as the band struck up, the wretched knight sank on to a chair, drew out his watch, and muttered 'Six more hours!' Something of the old spirit still lurks in certain quarters. Witness the playful entry in the Fines Book of a certain college, the ink of which is hardly yet dry: 'A hairpin having been found in the parlour, the four unmarried fellows present . . . gave a bottle of wine to avert the omen.' It is now a platitude that Merrie England was not so merry as its reputation implies; presumably convivial Cambridge was not without its achings of head and heart. And posterity may yet admit that current university life is not so drab as we try to make out.

JAMES WALL.

DUSTBINS.

AT night it makes me laugh to see
 The dustbins standing in the street,
 They look like squat old revellers,
 Dishevelled, dirty, full of guile.
 The haughty houses of the Square,
 So prim and Georgian, so demure,
 Pretend the dustbins are not theirs,
 And shut their eyes with careful blinds.
 But as I pass the dustbins seem
 To leer at me with oafish jests :
 ' Oh ! ho ! ' they say, ' we stand outside,
 But still we haunt you like your sins.
 Dust to dust—so ends your pride !
 We keep your secrets in our bins.
 Tall your houses are and great,
 Ashes are their final fate.'

I watch by night the prowlers come
 To search the dustbins cautiously.
 Tibby and Tom creep down the steps
 With nose and whisker all alert,
 The slum cat like a shadow steals
 To snatch his share from pampered puss,—
 A chicken bone, a herring's head,
 Are riches for the finest cat.
 The dustbins chuckle as they come—
 ' Oh, help yourselves, but share the feast,
 For hunger makes us all akin.
 There's a trifle for the least ;
 We'll please you all who seek our bin.
 Rake the ashes till you find
 Bone or tit-bit to your mind.'

Then all the dogs come out betimes,
 Thievish at heart, though high their breed ;
 The stolen morsel is more sweet
 Than any dinner on a plate.

With eager nose and searching paw
They rake the ashes for a prize.
The dustbins mutter to the dogs—
' Paddy and Peter, Jack and Tim,
You're not so fine as each pretends—
Wait till day is growing dim,
You'll turn to jackals then, my friends,
Skulk and snatch the bone you like,
Cocker, terrier, and tyke.'

There's an old woman I have watched ;
She steals out softly from her lane
To gather cinders in a sack,
So fearful and so furtive she,
Like one who has known kindlier days.
The bits of bread are treasure trove,
She hides them quickly in her shawl.
With bird-like, furtive look she fills
Her sack, then off she creeps again
Into the shadows of the arch.
I almost hear a dustbin sigh—
' It's well for her that waste is rife,
She values what the rich despise.
My house holds a thriftless wife,
She squanders what the poor would prize.
We who keep our watch by night
See a world that fears the light.'

The street lamps make a topaz chain,
Like golden chariots the trams
Clank by with humming song of haste.
Pale and indifferent as a flower
The moon floats high above the street ;
The dustbins serenade her grace.
They have no reverence, no awe ;
They jest at great men and at rogues.
' So many things that we could tell
Of high and low life, though we're bins !
We must keep our lids on well
To hide your refuse and your sins.
Here we sit so squat and sly
Laughing at the passers-by.'

W. M. LETTS.

LETTERS FROM NOWHERE.

BY ROSE FYLEMAN.

I.

From Titania to Shakespeare, after their meeting in the Forest of Arden.

Titania, Queen of the Fairies, to her Cousin, William Shakespeare, Prince of the Bright and Glorious Realm of Fair Wit, Gentle Beauty, and Sweet Fantasy.

DEAR COUSIN,—Touching the Letter We have lately received from you and the contents thereof ; We have pondered not a little upon the happy circumstances of Our late meeting in Our beloved Forest of Arden, and have decided to accord you the Boon which you now ask of Us in that same Letter.

If it be still your wish to introduce Our Person into one of those most gracious Fantasies which are the Children of your truly Royal Heart and Imagination, We hereby give Our Queenly Consent and Permission, desiring only that all should be fit and seemly and worthy of Our High Estate, as indeed it needs must be so, being the Work of so marvellously noble and gentle a Prince as Yourself.

We should be well pleased if the Ladies who attended Us on the occasion of Our late meeting (to wit, the Ladies Moth, Mustard-seed and Pease-blossom) might also bear some small part in this Pageantry of your Pen. They are dear to Our Heart, and are indeed not unworthy of such Honour.

With regard to our King and Consort, Oberon, We are content to leave this matter entirely in your hands. It would, We think, be of no disservice to His Majesty, if He could be displayed to Himself and to the World, not maliciously or with intent of unkindness, but with some indication, perchance, of His Majesty's not infrequent slight habit of Peevishness and Contrariness of Conduct and Behaviour.

We place at your disposal Our good Subject and Servant, Puck, sometimes known as Robin Goodfellow, who bears this message.

We deem it not unlikely that his Sprightly Antics and Merry Demeanour may be of some service to you in your Quaint Labours.

We beg you to make of him what use you may.

We thank you for your gracious Letter, and for your expressions of Devotion and Homage. We Ourselves are proud to claim cousinly kinship with one so patently and so gloriously endowed with those Transcendent Powers which have from Time Immemorial been the acknowledged birthright of Our Royal and Illustrious House.

Our Fairy Blessing be upon you and upon all your Labours.

Signed in all Cousinly Love and Comradeliness,

TITANIA (R).

II.

Cinderella's Letter to her Fairy Godmother the day after the Ball.

DEAR GODMOTHER,—Of course I know that you are quite aware of everything that happened last night, but all the same I feel that I must write and explain, because I'm so miserable and unhappy about it all, and I do so hope you'll forgive me and perhaps let me have another chance.

It was all so wonderful, dear Godmother, and—oh, it's no good trying to conceal anything from you—I loved him from the minute I saw him. The Prince, I mean. He was so handsome, and he danced so *beautifully*, and he said such adorable things to me, and—well, it may be very presumptuous and conceited of me, but I really do think he liked me a little too.

Of course, I know he's a very great Prince and meets all sorts of grand people, and I've no right to think of him that way at all, but he's not a bit proud or conceited; he's just the sort of lover that a girl dreams of, *come true*.

I did mean to remember about 12 o'clock—truly I did.

But there wasn't a clock in the room that we were sitting out in after supper, and I'm afraid in the end I simply forgot all about the time. I forgot everything excepting how happy I was.

Darling Godmother, I know I don't deserve to be forgiven after all your kindness and the lovely dress and everything—(I told him just a little about you, and he said you sounded an absolute dear, and he's dying to get to know you)—but I can't bear the thought of never seeing him again.

I don't mind a bit about the housework and cooking here and all that part, but if you could perhaps let him know somehow that I'm still alive and that I'm an all-right sort of person really, not just an impostor, you know, I should feel so much happier.

After all, Daddy *is* a King and I'm really a Princess, and if it hadn't been for his second marriage, things would have been quite different—wouldn't they?

When they all made such a fuss of me last night and called me 'Princess,' I didn't contradict them. I didn't think I need explain.

He said it made no difference to him what or who I was. But I should hate him to think I hadn't been quite truthful in any way, and he may have seen me in my rags and wondered what it all meant. I never looked back at all. I just ran and ran.

Dear Godmother, *please* do see what you can do about it all. You're so clever and so wonderful, I know you'll think of something to make things right. I think I shall die if I don't see him soon.

I hope the dress got back to you all right. I lost one of my slippers on the stairs, but I suppose the things would all reach you somehow. If there's a shoe missing it will be at the Palace somewhere.

I'm afraid I haven't thanked you properly for my lovely evening, but I can't settle to anything. I never knew being in love was so dreadfully upsetting, and I've got rather a cold, too, with running home in my thin little house-dress and no coat.

I can hear my step-mother coming along the passage to give orders about dinner, so I can't write any more.

Your very penitent and grateful and
miserable and loving god-child,

CINDERELLA.

III.

*From the Cook at the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty's Parents to
Her Majesty the Queen of Hearts.*

MADAM,—I hear you are wanting a cook and take the liberty of applying for the situation.

I am accustomed to cooking for Royal families and to the best of everything, including gold plate, and have always had a scullion and kitchen-knave under me.

I am leaving my present place owing to rather peculiar goings-

on which have upset the staff. Our young lady is also going to be married, and I feel quite unsettled and think it better to make a change.

I should like to mention that I do not allow any interference in my kitchen, and am very much against ladies making their own tarts and so on, which often causes trouble with the rest of the staff.

I should also like to know whether you keep any fairy godmothers in the house or have any old women in the attics at your palace, as I do not care for that kind of person and would object to living in the house with them.

I trust I may suit your requirements and shall be pleased to call at the Palace any evening you would like to see me, but find it difficult to get out in the day as the whole place is in the hands of the decorators and I cannot leave my maids.

Yours respectfully,

JANE STOUT.

P.S.—I have been in my present situation over a hundred years.

IV.

From Goldilocks' Father to the Chief of the Local Police.

DEAR SIR,—I wish to make a complaint in the matter of a recent occurrence of a most unpleasant character.

There is at present a family resident in this neighbourhood known as the Three Bears.

A few days ago my little daughter, Goldilocks, aged six, received such astonishing treatment at the hands of these people that I feel that I should be failing in my duty as a citizen if I omitted to bring it under your notice.

Goldilocks is, I think I may say without any undue parental prejudice, a most charming and attractive child.

She has already won prizes for elocution and drawing, and has had her portrait exhibited in a well-known firm's gallery of beautiful children.

She is known throughout the neighbourhood for her good manners and sweet disposition.

The child has a very friendly nature, and naturally expects to be made welcome wherever she may find herself.

She recently paid a visit to the house of the aforesaid Three Bears, and while awaiting their arrival made herself entirely at

home in the innocent and trusting manner which is so engaging in a child, and particularly in so delightful a child as my little daughter.

For no other reason than this (a slight injury to a piece of furniture being not worth considering) she was violently set upon by these people on their return home, and chased from their house.

She was able to make her escape by the window and arrived home in a most deplorable condition. She has still not entirely recovered from the shock, and the very mention of the word 'Bear' is enough to bring on an attack of hysterical weeping. I think you will agree with me that affairs are coming to a pretty pass when a child may not help herself to food in another person's house without laying herself open to an attack of this kind.

I should be very glad, therefore, if you would make some inquiries about these people, with a view to their possible ejection from what has always been a decent neighbourhood.

I am unable to ascertain what is their exact position or what reputation they bear in the town, but I feel that it is advisable that you should keep an eye on them. It is very likely that they would come under the undesirable alien restrictions.

At any rate, I am sure you will agree that the frightening of innocent children is a thing which must be very rigidly discouraged, and that it would be well for a careful watch to be kept on the Bear family for some little time.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES BLACKLOCK.

P.S.—Would it be advisable to put the N.S.P.C.C. on the track of the Bear family ?

V.

Love-Letter from a Butterfly to a Marguerite.

PRETTIEST, DAINTIEST, DEAREST, DARLINGEST OF LOVELINESSES!—I must tell you. . . . I can't wait until I see you to-morrow. . . .

I am enfolding this in the dewdrop which you will find to-morrow morning at dawn lying on your youngest attendant leaf. (How did it get there ? Ah ! that is my secret.)

Do you know what it is that I must tell you ? Do you know, Marguerite ?

It is that I adore you, you slender, tender, delicate, delicious

creature. *Moonflower* they call you, and truly your pearly petals are as lovely as the moonbeams, nay, far lovelier. Did you feel me kissing them yesterday? You looked so calm and pale. You hardly swayed on your long, graceful stem. Did you know? To-morrow I will kiss them again. Every one of them. I will kiss them until they turn to rosy pink like the petals of your little cousin, the field-daisy.

I saw a lady in the meadows yesterday. Her hair was golden and she had long white hands. She was very lovely. A princess, I think. She wore a dress of crimson silk with fluttering tassels on it. She looked at me and smiled, and said, 'What a beautiful butterfly!'

I loved her for a moment. Her hair was very bright. But your *heart* is golden and your petals are whiter than her fingers, and I love you for ever.

I wonder where she lives. . . .

It is so quiet and sweet in the dusk, Marguerite. There is a honeysuckle flower close by. Her scent is still fragrant, though presently she will be quite old and faded. Already she is withering a little.

I must go and say good-night to her. That will please her.

Last week she was really very lovely, and we spent some happy moments together.

But you are far more beautiful than she is, and I do not care for too much perfume. It is apt to cloy.

Besides, she is a wild thing, and has a trick, which I don't care for, of dancing and wantoning with the wind.

I shall come to you to-morrow, Marguerite. It is too misty and cold in your meadow for me to come at night. And you must sleep, my pretty, and be fresh and brave for the morning.

Will you open your golden heart to me? Will you, Marguerite? Will you tell me that you love me a little? Will you rock me gently on your soft, soft petals?

Good-night, sweet moon and sun. Good-night. But when you see this it will be good-morning.

Will it indeed be a good morning for me and for you? Oh, if you will but be a little kind, a little, such a little, it will be the best and fairest morning of all the year for

Your adoring

BUTTERFLY.

VI.

A Mermaid to Her Mother.

DEAREST MOTHER,—I got here quite safely, but it seemed a very long way, and if it hadn't been for a friendly dolphin who gave me a splendid lift, I don't think I should ever have arrived.

Auntie is very kind and they have a lovely palace—mother-of-pearl.

I think I like our pink coral better, really, but my cousins say pink coral is very old-fashioned, and mother-of-pearl is all the rage just now; and I must say theirs looks very well at night, when they have it lit up with those luminous jelly-fish.

We went for an excursion up a river the other day. It was very thrilling. The cousins were quite amused when they heard that I'd never really seen any human beings before excepting one or two drowned sailors, which doesn't count, they say.

But, of course, it's so very different living in mid-ocean as we do.

Another day we went quite close to a beach. I didn't think much of the human beings we saw bathing. They had very little hair as far as I could make out, and of course legs are not a patch on tails; as for their swimming, it was ludicrous.

The children were rather sweet. I came quite close to one little girl, and she stooped down to stroke the little scales at the end of my tail.

Her mother was bathing near her and I heard the little girl tell her she had seen a mermaid.

'Oh no, darling, I don't think you *could* have done,' her mother said. Wasn't it silly? I swam quite close to her, too, but she didn't see me. I suppose she thought I was a wave. She reminded me rather of that large codfish that lives in our anemone patch.

There's a mermaid here who goes in for the siren business—sitting on rocks and playing, you know, and luring boatmen on to the reefs. I don't really see much fun in it, and I don't believe she makes much of a success of it in spite of her talk.

I don't like dead human beings anyway, and if you're unlucky and fall in love with a live one it always means trouble, doesn't it?

Net-breaking isn't bad fun. There's a bit of sport in that because they might catch you. We've been out several times and let out *shoals* of darling fishes.

We had a delicious party on Uncle's birthday. They said the Sea-serpent was coming, but in the end he didn't. I should

have loved to meet him; but he's very shy, I hear. We had all sorts of racing, of course, and the dancing was lovely, with a lot of intricate new figures which I soon managed to pick up, and the siren girl sang rather well. I had quite a lot of admirers and wore my pearls and my little foam coatee. We've seen several submarines, and a cable goes through the end of the garden.

Would you mind very much if I had my hair off? Several of the mermaids here have had it done, and it does save such a lot of trouble.

I hope you're looking after my starfish. I expect they miss me rather.

Please give my love to everybody, and tell Daddy I've got three more anchors for his collection.

Your affectionate daughter,

UNDINE.

P.S.—I've had it off.

VII.

From Humphrey Taylour, wool factor, of Banbury in Warwickshire, to his friend Walter Moore, notary, of Cheapside, London.

MY DEAR WALTER,—My cousin John is to travel to Town this next week, and I have asked him to bear this letter to thee, together with a small bottle of Mother's damson cordial, which I hope thou wilt like. And I am content it hath so chanced that I am able to write to thee, as for the past month I have been anxious to get thy help in a matter which hath given me much concern.

Thou knowest I am no scholar, Walter, and I shall find it difficult to tell thee what is in my mind, and yet I am fain to get thy help. Know then that I have lost my heart to the fairest lady in the world, and though I doubt thou wilt make game of me for't, it is to me a very serious thing and I am in much distress.

It happened thus :

Six weeks ago last Thursday, as I stood by the open door of our house, which, thou rememberest, is in the High Street, there came riding up the street a lady. She rode all alone and unattended, on a great white horse. The sun shone on her golden hair and on the horse's trappings, which were very rich and fine, and she looked straight in front of her with the bluest eyes I ever yet saw in my life. Her dress was very beautiful, and she wore jewellery such as great ladies wear. The precious stones glinted in the bright light.

A strange thing, too, was that she had some sort of small bells fastened to her feet, and as she rode the bells made a marvellously sweet jangling noise. It was like fairy music ; I never heard the like.

None seemed to take much heed of her. It was the mid-day hour, when most folk are at their dinners. She never looked at me, nor, indeed, at anyone, but rode straight up the street and out along the London road past the Cross at the top of the hill. And I stood quite still and watched her. I could not move, but my heart went along with her.

All day long the sight of her was with me, and the sound of the music she made, and they have not left me since, day or night.

I'm no poet, Walter, thou knowest ; I think I should die happy if I could make a poem about that lady that would live after I am dead, so that she should be remembered by men in years to come. All I could do was to make this foolish jingle, which goes round and round in my head all day and will not leave me. Maybe if I write it down it will cease to torment me :

‘ Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross
To see a fair lady ride on a white horse,
Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes.’

And now, Walter, as thou art my friend, give me what help thou canst, though I fear thou canst but little. Yet I think thou wilt be ready to take pity on my despair.

I pray thee, then, make inquiries, wherever and whenever thou art able, with regard to this lady of the white horse. It may be she has been seen in London and is known there. If she be in London she will assuredly have been remarked by reason of her exceeding beauty, also in the matter of the music.

At times I wonder whether she was a real lady at all, or whether she appeared to me only by reason of some fairy magic which I comprehend not.

Be that as it may, I beg thee, if thou lovest me, to give me what assistance thou canst devise in this matter, but privily, making no mention of my name lest folk should laugh at me for a simpleton.

I send thee my greetings and beg thee not to mock at my unhappy plight.

Thy much troubled friend,

HUMPHREY TAYLOUR.

TAR:
Lun
univ
two
expl
wher
roun
reput
made
cond
whet
achie
than
adver
O
Gress
in po
Eman
boy l
cartin
spirit
Kemb
makin
by hi
Willia
experi
pleasin
men o
mont,
Virgin
Script
profess
Fro
When
ments,

A LORDLY IMPOSTOR.

'LOUIS DE ROUGEMONT.'

TARTARIN and the Chocolate Soldier—not to mention Sir Henry Lunn—have settled definitely the place of Switzerland in the universal mind. For the last thirty years—probably for the next two thousand—the Swiss have been and will be hotel-keepers and exploiters of their scenic advantages. But in their earlier avatars, when Alps were merely uncomfortable instead of profitable surroundings and the cantons excellent places to get away from, their reputation for cosmopolitan adventurousness and splendid courage made them sought after by Emperors and Popes and leaders of *condottieri* beyond all other nations. It is doubtful, however, whether the most daring and most notable of the older generations achieved greater notoriety or displayed more cheery recklessness than did the young Vaudois farmer-carter-valet-pearler-waiter-adventurer whose pen-name heads this section.

On November 12, 1847, a somewhat disreputable farmer of Gresset, near Yverdon, on the Lake of Neuchâtel, found himself in possession of a new son whom—being himself Antoine Samuel Emanuel Grien (or Grin)—he had baptised as Henri Louis. The boy lived precariously on the farm till he was ten, and then did carting for his father at Yverdon; after six years of this his soaring spirit urged him afield, and he became courier to the actress Fanny Kemble, passing from her to a French family (de Miéville), and making himself wherever he went liked by his employers and hated by his fellow-servants. In 1874 he joined the household of Sir William Cleaver Francis Robinson, a colonial administrator of wide experience whose culture, mainly expressed through a slight but pleasing poetical and musical talent, attracted to him many learned men of like calibre. Among these was a Monsieur Louis de Rougemont, a pious French savant whose chief work was a *Traité de la Virginité*, in which he expounded 'all that, according to the Holy Scriptures, the Councils, and the Fathers, appertains to that sacred profession.'

From 1874 to 1877 Robinson was Governor of Western Australia. When in the latter year he was transferred to the Straits Settlements, Henri found the new home irksome; he seems to have left

Singapore hurriedly for Dutch Malaysia, and by 1878 had wandered back to Australia and settled in Port Douglas on the edge of North Queensland civilisation. There he proceeded to make a spasmodic living by photography among the few tourists and timber-getters and miners who passed that way in order to reach the great tablelands of the upper Barron (nowadays a railway from Cairns takes you up, but in those days Cairns was barely born, and the gorge of the lower Barron was an impassable obstacle). During the 1880's he abandoned this existence also, and was employed aboard a pearling schooner in the capacity of cook. Now a shearers' cook is an important personage, and don't you dare forget it! but a pearling-boat's cook is merely a receptacle for foul language and tall stories. Henri absorbed all the stories, and probably believed most of them; what he couldn't swallow he reserved for the sustenance of others; and he emerged from that experience avid of Munchausenisms, but with enough superficial knowledge of northern Australian conditions to carry him through many later tests made on him by people as superficial as himself. He also during this period seems to have developed a taste for invention, and came to the conclusion that his talents were being wasted on the unappreciative and sparsely populated North.

So about 1882 he arrived in Sydney, where he acquired a wife and a share in a small pearling schooner, and eked out the scanty proceeds of that venture by travelling the country districts as a painter in oils of pictures enlarged from photographs. In 1888 he abandoned this means of livelihood for the more lucrative one of describing apocryphal gold-mines up North, in search of which trustful syndicates sent him on a salary and commission. On one occasion his imagination travelled farther afield, and he claimed the discovery in the Solomons of a mountain of pure copper, 'beautiful to behold when the sun shone'; this unfortunately discredited him with his backers, and he was forced to take a position as waiter in a small restaurant at Newtown—which may be roughly described as the Camden Town of Sydney. Here his stock of quite incredible stories and his voracious appetite for more made him a favourite among the habitués of the restaurant, and he had the astonishing good luck to meet there a genuine explorer. Harry Stockdale had spent during the early 1880's a good deal of time and effort in exhaustively pioneering the little-known coasts of the Kimberley district in Western Australia, more especially the shores and surroundings of Cambridge Gulf on the

borders of the Northern Territory. He was a thoroughly good fellow, as straight as a die and as unsuspecting as a sweet-tempered baby; when he found Grien, as he thought, really interested in the details of exploration, all his diaries (and he had kept careful record of his journeyings from start to finish) were at once placed at the inquisitive waiter's disposal. Grien took them home, saturated himself with them, copied out large slabs of them. Life was peaceful and more or less happy—for the Grien family grew apace—until the inventive side of Henri came uppermost, and he made the grave mistake of becoming a practical inventor.

He started with 'a patent garbage exterminator' of which we know nothing more. But his pearling experiences had directed his imagination towards the creation of a diving-dress that should be surrounded with warm air, clad in which divers might exploit the oyster-beds at greater depths than were accessible by the methods then in use up North. Without delay he waxed voluble about his notions, collected from the Newtown clientèle and elsewhere funds sufficient to construct a dress, and persuaded a Dane to go down in it in Port Jackson. The Dane did not reappear, and Grien went into hiding. Soon afterwards his wife was forced to take out a maintenance order against him, and the police—who had been looking for him uninterestedly apropos of the Dane's disappearance—became active in their search. Grien left Sydney hurriedly, taking with him one of the slabs of Stockdale diaries that he had not had time to copy out, and is next heard of (though his Sydney friends did not know it till long afterwards) at Wellington in New Zealand, where he joined a group of Spiritualists. By this time he was at his wits' end for food, emaciated and not altogether master of his own mind. The group found him an excellent 'medium,' helped him as much as they could, listened to his tall stories—now greatly expanded and rendered more plausible by their leavening of Stockdale's genuine adventures—and introduced him to a journalist (Mr. T. L. Mills), from whose descriptions this pupa stage of Grien's life can be reconstructed. Warming to his work in a sympathetic atmosphere (I refer to the group, not to the journalist), Henri began to construct a tale in which he himself half believed, and had visions of European fame as the hero of it. Presently, says Mills,

'he made the proposition to me that we should collaborate—he to spin his yarns, and I to write them up; he had an idea of going direct into book form. I was not impressed. Candidly, but very

gently, I told him that I was a bit of a liar myself, as became a journalist of repute with every man's hand against him, and that I could not see a market for that sort of thing. "Better make fiction of it, and then you will be a best seller," said I. But he would not hear of its being fictionised; he had a great belief in his own stories.'

So Henri turned again to the Spiritualists, who maintained their belief in him, and maybe even in his stories; and after a while they arranged that he should be allowed to work his passage to England as assistant steward in the s.s. *Waikato*, which landed him in London during March 1898.

Within a month he was endeavouring to plant his fatal diving-dress on an engineering firm in Finsbury Circus. But not thus was fame to be his. Fleet Street had, as it happened, just seen the birth of a new monthly magazine, avid of adventure stories that might be put forward as true by their authors. Grien saw his chance, but could not risk the discovery of his true past by appearing in his own person. He created for himself a new personality, borrowing the name of his former employer's learned friend and attaching it and himself to a wholly fictitious French shoemaker of the Boulevard Haussmann (a street which, by the by, did not exist in 1847); then, following the example of many stranded Australians of the time, 'Louis de Rougemont' sought out Sir John Henniker Heaton, and from him obtained a cautious introduction to the editor of the *Wide World Magazine*.

Now he began to display a cunning that had not previously appeared in him. He was the simple, childlike, unassuming narrator of heartrending adventures that to him had been everyday occurrences. In poor English he poured out his stories, the indigestible *mélange* of pearling-yarns and Stockdale's diaries and his own untamed imagination, so volubly and at the same time so incoherently that it took several expert pressmen's whole time and skill to rearrange them in some sort of possible chronological order; he antedated his arrival in Australia to 1864 to give room for everything—possibly also to secure priority for his own alleged discoveries should Stockdale ever assert his claim. To-day it staggers one to remember that his tale was swallowed. He was tested (so the *Wide World Magazine* claimed) by eminent geographers and anthropologists. James Scott Keltie and Hugh R. Mill were his literary godfathers, 'satisfied that not only is M. de Rougemont's narrative perfectly accurate, but that it is of

the highest scientific value.'¹ Other experts were said to have questioned him on numberless details of Western Australian geography and ethnology, to have found him exact and faultless in his account of blackfellow customs and antipodean landscapes. No one at that moment seems to have thought of verifying a much more easily verifiable set of statements—his account of his experiences in Australia since he reached civilisation again; yet the submarine cable was working, and it was a matter of a few days only to ascertain whether at a given time a mysterious stranger from the far interior had reached the goldfields and Perth (as Grien declared he had), and what account he had then given of his wanderings to people who could check his statements without much difficulty. Australia has its appetite for sensations, and anyone coming from the interior to Mount Margaret and Coolgardie, or from Coolgardie to Perth, in those wild gold-seeking years—anyone, especially, who had such stories to tell as Grien afterwards unloaded on England, of tin and gold and opals and rubies—must have been a local hero till his stories were proved false. But, while scientific men were summoned to confirm the truth of geographical statements anyone could check by a map, or ethnographical allegations about tribes they had never heard of, the simple, straightforward, easy tests that would have upset Grien's whole story at once were neglected. It does not appear that any Australian was called in; Australians did protest as soon as the stories became public, but were apparently ruled out of court because they did not wait to hear the complete rigmarole before condemning it.

It is not, of course, suggested that his statements were all false. On the contrary, most of the more startling stories—startling, that is, to English ears, such as the turtle-riding, the stinging fish, the apparition of the dugong—are true enough; only, they did not happen to Grien. In so far as he confined himself to Stockdale's diaries and Stockdale's surveyed areas, he was on sure ground. The earlier sections of his published narrative, which dealt either with his fictitious autobiography before reaching Australia or with his adventures while pearling, were fairly plausible and outside contradiction; if a perfect stranger chooses to tell you his name and boyhood adventures, it is difficult as well as

¹ This was the claim of the magazine which published Grien's story. But the two eminent geographers subsequently denied that they had guaranteed anything except the probability that Grien had visited certain regions of Australia.

uninteresting to challenge his accuracy. Where Grien went wrong was in expatiating on blackfellow life, as to which Stockdale helped him very little and his pearlers' yarns misled him gravely. The Australian blackfellow happens to have constructed for himself a social edifice quite unlike that of other aboriginal races, partly because he has been so long isolated from the mass of mankind, partly because the land he occupies forces on him certain food restrictions and tribal compromises. Consequently when 'Monsieur de Rougemont' described to enthralled but ill-informed audiences the cannibal habits, the religion (with a Great Spirit inhabiting the Milky Way), the marriage ceremonies, the government by single chiefs, the clan poets who 'sold their effusions to other tribes,' the wives who would 'quarrel about the merits and demerits of their own families and countries; but the greatest source of heartburning and trouble was the importation of a new wife,' the language of signs and slaps and clicks, and all the other intimate details, borrowed from every aboriginal race on earth or merely invented, which went to make up his picture of Australian life in the north-west, he discredited himself as thoroughly as when he viewed the wombats (which are non-tropical badgers of some weight and solidity) 'rising in clouds every evening at sunset' from islands in Cambridge Gulf.

For a month or so, however, 'Monsieur de Rougemont' had things all his own way. His reputation stood so high that he was asked to address two sections (the geographical and the ethnological) of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Bristol in September. Then the storm burst. On the 9th he delivered his geographical address, about which the only notable thing is that it differed markedly—and with good reason—from his magazine articles, so that critics complained he had told them nothing he couldn't have got from books. On that morning the *Daily Chronicle* published an article, headed with a large query, in which Louis Becke asked a few searching but not yet vital questions. On the 12th, the day on which his ethnological address was read at Bristol, correspondents in the *Chronicle* attacked his claim to have navigated a 40-ton schooner single-handed through tropical storms and tidal waves and precipice-beset gorges; next day Professor Forbes wanted to know how a pearling-schooner came to be equipped like the famous vessel that carried the Swiss Family Robinson; then came, thick and fast, confrontations of the adventurer with men who really did know something about

the Australian inland country, exposures of his fantastic natural history, his startling accounts of tribal customs, his remarkable ill-luck in avoiding all the telegraph lines and boundary fences and cattle-stations that were strewn about the area in which he claimed to have been a tribal king or an eager explorer.

That was a stirring month for the London press. On the 1st Colonel Henry had committed suicide, and reopened the Dreyfus case; on the 5th Cavaignac resigned from the French cabinet, and it was decided to give Dreyfus another chance; on the 25th Esterhazy published in the *Observer* his confession of having forged the notorious *bordereau*. More exciting still, on the 5th had come to London the news of Omdurman, and for the rest of the month stories of the final Dervish defeat poured in on glutted editors, until they were replaced by almost more exciting rumours about Marchand's presence at Fashoda. Yet from the 9th to the 29th 'Monsieur de Rougemont' shared the honours of the central page with Kitchener and Dreyfus. To do him justice, he fought hard and with astonishing courage, attacking his attackers indomitably and with a cheerful impertinence that won him many supporters, refusing to admit a single error in his own audacious story—in which, by this time, he had probably come to believe as firmly as anyone. By the end of the month, though for intelligent observers his truthfulness was completely discredited, to the public at large honours seemed to be easy.

Meanwhile, in Australia the news of the *Wide World Magazine* articles had been received with utter indifference, and the addresses to the British Association merely cast a doubt on the sanity of that learned body. Dismissing the adventures as purely corroborative detail (putting the matter Gilbertianly) designed to bolster up an otherwise unconvincing narrative about mythical goldfields, the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* added: 'What is more remarkable is that he didn't try to do something with his discoveries here, instead of placing them on a prostrate London market, which hasn't yet recovered from its West Australian experiences.' Later the same newspaper remarked that there was 'nothing in the Rougemont story worth making any kind of fuss over,' and that it 'should not have fooled anybody without a considerable natural capacity in that line.' But one useful thing it did—on September 16 it reproduced from the August *W.W.M.* article a sketch of the man himself. At once its offices were inundated with people who recognised their old acquaintance

Henri Louis Grien, and on the 21st Mrs. Grien identified him beyond doubt. After that no one worried about him any more, except Harry Stockdale, very indignant at the use made of his diaries, and a few loyal gentlemen who could not understand why Grien had been allowed without protest to entertain the British Association with pretensions to being 'an emissary of Empire' and tales of how he made for the blacks nude portraits of Queen Victoria, seven feet high and carrying a huge waddy, and a colossal statue of the Prince of Wales armed with throwing-spears. (These diversions were indulged in at a British Association banquet, not a regular meeting, but even at this distance they do seem over the odds.)

In London, however—where, it is fair to say, the banquet speech seems not to have been published—the affair was approaching its climax. On October 3 'Monsieur de Rougemont' delivered a public lecture there, and one of his auditors recognised him as the diving-dress inventor of the previous spring, whose name was assuredly Grien. That hint taken, it was discovered that he had shipped aboard the *Waikato* as Grien, and the bubble burst. Cabled messages from Sydney soon supplied full details of his long life there, which left no room for years of aboriginal kingship in the North-west. The *Chronicle*, for its part, tracked its prey to Switzerland and found that in July, while audaciously 'De Rougemont' in London, Henri had actually visited his Grien relations in the canton Vaud. On the 8th began a full exposure of the whole imposture in the *Chronicle's* columns; on the 13th Henri bolted to Switzerland, after making a last attempt to save himself by suggesting in letters the existence of another Henri Grien; by the 21st all was over, and Grien had apparently gone the way of all impostors into undisturbed obscurity.

Not he! When a few Sydney pressmen, hurrying across the Indian Ocean in advance of the contingents, reached Natal in September 1899, the hoardings of Durban were still adorned with a large music-hall poster—'To-night! To-night! The Greatest Liar on Earth!' No one can deny the man's audacity. We were too much occupied with war business to spare time for inquiry into his appearances there; but not long afterwards he was advertised to tell his story in Melbourne and Sydney, and—to judge by press notices—was not a success there even as a liar. Of his next twelve years I can find no record. About 1914 he was heard of as having re-married, and during the war came

under notice as the inventor of a patent food that was intended to replace meat ; he had changed his name again, and was known as Louis Redmond or Redman. This invention, however, seems to have been as unsuccessful, if not as fatal, as the diving-dress, for at the Armistice he was living on charity in a Surrey village ; in 1920 he was admitted an in-patient of the London Homœopathic Hospital, and on June 9, 1921, died in the infirmary of the Kensington workhouse. And he was scarcely buried when a foolish attempt was made to resuscitate the long-forgotten imposture on the strength of a coastal voyage made by some film-seeking new chums in 1917. They had actually seen with their own eyes alligators (which were crocodiles—Australia has no alligators), sting-rays (which Captain Cook saw in Botany Bay), dugongs (which anyone can see almost anywhere between Brisbane and Broome), and coral-reefs. 'De Rougemont' had mentioned all these marvels ; therefore his reputation was completely vindicated ! Henri must have turned in his grave.

Thus ignominiously our lordly impostor fades out of history. One cannot but deplore his ending, so unworthy of his daring and almost gallant ambitions. Always his soaring mind had lifted him beyond the menial or sordid surroundings of his outward life ; courier, valet, cook, waiter, he had dreamed visions of wider notoriety and more stirring adventure ; he absorbed the excitement of other men's doings into the comparatively drab matter of his own existence until he scarcely knew dream from fact. Even in despair he insisted on remaining unique—as a fugitive in New Zealand he made himself other-worldly and mediumistic ; when indisputably proved a liar, at least he claimed to be the greatest on earth. A less self-deceived impostor with his material could in the England of the 1890's have made far more profitable use of it, and might easily have disappeared in the end with a fortune. That Henri achieved so little, and was discredited so soon, speaks ill for his cleverness, but goes far to prove his somewhat crazed sincerity. He promoted no mining companies ; he entrapped no unwary settlers ; we will let him lie.

ARTHUR JOSE.

THE WRECK OF THE 'ST. ABBS.'

BY COLONEL SIR EDWARD C. ROSS, Kt., C.S.I.

[THE following account of the wreck of the sailing ship *St. Abbs* on the Juan de Nuevo, or Farquhar Islands, in June 1855, was written by the late Sir Edward Ross some years before his death at Clifton in 1913. It may be of interest, therefore, to give an outline of Sir Edward's career which commenced in so unpropitious a manner. Born in the year 1836, he entered the service of the Honourable East India Company and was appointed to the 3rd Bombay Regiment on March 7, 1855. During the Mutiny he served in Central India under Sir Hugh Rose in 1857-58, and was present at the siege and capture of Rathgur, action at Baroda, relief of Saugor, capture of Garracota, the forcing of the Muddenpore Pass, siege and storm of Jhansi, and the Battle of the Betwa.

On January 1, 1862, Lieutenant Ross joined the 2nd Baluch Regiment, and was later transferred as adjutant to the 1st Baluch Regiment, from which he entered the Political Department. From April 19, 1863, to April 15, 1871, he was Political Agent at Gwadar; and at Masqat from the latter date to October 12, 1872, when he became Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, and Consul-General for Fars. This appointment he held for close on nineteen years, to March, 1891, which must almost be a record; for I doubt if even Sir Percy Cox held it for so lengthy a period. Having already received the C.S.I. for his valuable services amid such trying conditions in the Gulf, Colonel Ross retired in 1891, and was created a Knight Bachelor the following year.

As Sir Edward and Lady Ross, and their family, were close friends and neighbours of my parents in Clifton, it was my good fortune to meet Sir Edward frequently when I was home on leave; and I was always impressed by his rare charm of manner and extreme modesty. I have no hesitation in saying, therefore, that in the ensuing narrative he has much minimised the great hardships that must have been endured by him and his fellow-survivors, whilst wrecked for weeks on a barren island in the Indian Ocean, more than seventy years ago.

H. H. AUSTIN (Brig.-Genl.).]

‘ But for the miracle, I mean our preservation, few in millions can speak like us ’ (*Tempest*).

Having received a cadetship in the H.E.I. Company’s Military Service, and passed the usual examination in 1854, being then eighteen years of age, my passage was taken in the good ship *St. Abbs*, which was advertised to sail direct for Bombay, the Presidency to which I was appointed, early in the year 1855.

The winter of that year was unusually severe, however ; the Thames and docks were hard frozen, and it was not until March 7 that the *St. Abbs*, released from the ice, was able to proceed to Greenwich, where I joined her and the voyage commenced.

Besides myself there were two Army cadet passengers, named Money and Poole ; and three others, Bell, Hawes, and Hamilton, for the Navy. March gales blew with their wonted energy in the Channel, but thence onwards the voyage to the Cape was fair and enjoyable. After rounding the Cape we sighted the very beautiful French island Réunion, formerly Bourbon, with its green slopes and striking volcanic peak rising over the blue waters to a height of 8,000 feet or so. But little did I think, as we glided by with a fair wind, how soon I was destined to make more intimate acquaintance with that lovely island. It was now the month of June, and we had entered the region of the south-east trade wind, which that year blew with, perhaps, unusual force. It was a fair wind, though, for the *St. Abbs*, and she bowled along at her best pace under studding sails and all her canvas set.

On the evening of June 14, we passengers had been sitting in the cuddy, and went to our cabins about 10 o’clock. I had been asleep for possibly half an hour when a sudden and appalling shock, which awakened all the sleepers in that doomed ship, was felt as the *St. Abbs* dashed upon a coral reef, and floundered amidst the foaming breakers. Only a minute before had the look-out sighted the white foam ahead, too late to avert the inevitable catastrophe. I was on the poop at a bound, and there the scene was surely one to dismay the stoutest heart. The wildest confusion prevailed, men running to and fro without plan or purpose ; whilst spars clattered down about our ears, and huge seas poured over all. The darkness of the night was intense, increased by drizzling rain ; and around the ship naught was to be seen but the white foam of the enormous breakers tearing past and over us with deafening roar. The ship rolled terribly, and we had to cling to ropes with all our strength to avoid being swept overboard.

The *St. Abbs* presently began to work round on the reef, till at last her bow was turned to face the oncoming rollers ; but when her hull came abeam, the main-mast, foretop-mast and mizzentop-mast snapped and fell together with one terrific crash. After the wreckage had been partially cleared away, and the ship had turned her head to sea on the reef, the motion became less trying. It was now past midnight, and during the preceding two hours we passengers had been huddled together on the poop in our night attire, the waves drenching us as each succeeding one broke over the vessel.

Cold, wet and worn out, we now ventured to leave the poop and all hands assembled in the cuddy. The night was passed chiefly in discussing our probable geographical position, which seemed all unknown to captain or officers at that time ; and, indeed, it was long after that we learnt on what reefs we had struck. The ship itself was in a hopeless condition. She had been sorely battered on the coral rocks, her decks gaped, the side cabins were flooded, and the quantity of water in the after hold clearly showed that her bottom was broken. Our only hope, therefore, lay in the morning light showing land close by. Some despaired ; others were still sanguine ; while the crew behaved well on the whole, and were quite orderly.

Nature, especially exhausted nature, will have its sway, and towards morning I, for one, had fallen asleep, and perhaps dreamed of other scenes. A cry of 'Land !' blessed the awakening, and hope stole in with the dawn. As the pale light increased, there, sure enough, left-half to leeward, was the unmistakable shadow of a low-lying island. It appeared in the faint light as if the island was overgrown with tall reeds or cane, topped with large bunches ; but as the sun's rays dispelled the early gloom, and glasses were brought to bear, it became evident that this appearance was caused by innumerable flocks of sea-fowl, hovering over the island at no great height from the sand. Fuller light revealed a larger and higher island, right-half to leeward and farther away. So we had struck far out on the coral reef between, and perhaps connecting, the two islands, but considerably nearer to the smaller one, which we afterwards knew as 'Bird Island.' The larger one proved to be Juan de Nuovo of the Farquhar Islands group, situated to the north-east of Madagascar. Between these two islands the rolling, breaking waves dashed straight on to, and at high tide over, the connecting reef, where no sign of dry foothold could at first be seen.

All who have sailed the sea, and watched the waves breaking on the shore in stormy weather, are aware of the difference between deep sea waves and those in shallow water. When the wave is running free in deep water, each crest is preceded and followed by a trough of the same shape and size. In shallowing water, on the other hand, the front of the wave becomes steeper, the back more sloping, and the crest pointed forwards until it falls a mass of foaming water. This is the 'breaker' with its deadly force, and explains how difficult it is for a boat or man to live through really great breakers such as surrounded the *St. Abbs*. Borne along by the south-east trade wind and drift current for more than a thousand miles of the Indian Ocean in an uninterrupted course, imagine the fury of the onslaught of the huge rolling billows on the obstacle checking their triumphant career, and the angry recoil of the receding waters !

The sun rose on June 15 on a desolate scene—a doomed ship, mastless and bestrewn with wreckage. The *St. Abbs* had carried three boats, the long boat and two cutters. Of the latter one had been smashed by the fall of masts and spars, so the long boat and one cutter alone were available. The former was on the deck amidships, and during the voyage had been the home of pigs and sheep, so must probably be in a very unseaworthy condition. In this long boat, however, lay the main hope of saving those who could not swim, as a raft was out of the question, for no living thing could cling to a raft in such a turmoil of breakers.

Now it could be tolerably well ascertained that the tide would be at the lowest about noon ; and it was judged that an attempt to gain the reef by boat should be made at that hour or earlier. So all efforts were directed to extricating and launching the long boat—a very difficult matter. By about 10.30, however, she was lowered over the side with Mr. Stone, first mate, and a couple of hands in her. In five minutes the boat was utterly smashed to pieces alongside, and with the greatest difficulty the mate was hauled on board in a state of insensibility. The two sailors, more nimble, had sprung up the side in time. The long boat sank ; and thus ended all attempts to escape from the ship for that day.

The mate, being unable to swim, was much shaken in body and mind, and took to his bunk despairing of escape. Very disheartening this, as Mr. Stone was much trusted for his sailor-like qualities and knowledge of his work.

What afternoon could be more dreary ! We sat about the deck

watching the surf beating the doomed ship to pieces. Sea-birds came whirling round us, screaming at us, but I could detect no sympathy in their discordant voices ; neither was I in a mood to appreciate the grace of their circling movements. They evidently looked on us with much curiosity, not unmixed with an eye to the main chance, and I have no doubt made up little excursion parties to view this unwonted scene.

The longest, dreariest day must, however, end. The sun set, and night descended upon a very hopeless situation, for the ship was clearly breaking up fast, and none could tell at what moment we should be whirled into eternity. Often a shock and tremor brought all on deck, in the thought that the final catastrophe had occurred. At length I found a dry spot, wrapped myself in a cloak, and slept till morning broke.

Another small chance still remained of saving the lives of all on board the *St. Abbs*, who numbered twenty-eight, including crew and passengers ; all men, fortunately, but many of them could not swim a stroke. The plan was to launch a heavy spar, with a long line attached, let it drift to the reef, and thus, perhaps, establish a precarious communication with the shore. This was done and the spar apparently reached the reef, but when the line was hauled taut there was evidently no firm holding for the spar, as the line gave limply to the pull. Unless the spar could be securely attached to the reef, this plan of escape must fail. If a few men could but gain the reef, was it not possible this might be effected ?

The sole remaining boat, the second cutter, was still aboard and uninjured ; and this afforded the last hope of escape for most of those on the ship. Time pressed. It was now well on in the forenoon of June 16. The tide would be lowest about one o'clock, and it seemed unlikely that the *St. Abbs*, though very strongly built, could survive another tide. In all probability she would break asunder during the ensuing night.

Captain C—— then proposed to make the attempt to take the cutter ashore with a couple of sailors, Bonche, a French Jersey man, and Edge, an Englishman. The utmost precautions were observed in launching the cutter safely. It was let carefully down over the stern of the ship, and the instant that it touched the water the attaching lines were slipped, and the boat flew on the crest of a huge roller. It lived through the surf till close to the reef, when it capsized. The captain and the two sailors gained the reef in safety, but the cutter was cast ashore a wreck.

Now we on board the *St. Abbs*, eagerly watching with glasses, saw a strange and cruel thing. The captain, unmindful of all but his own personal safety, and without any attempt to make fast the spar, hastened along the reef to Bird Island, followed by the English sailor Edge. The little Frenchman, Bonche, pluckily remained on the reef until I joined him later and we were driven off by the rising tide to save our lives; but alone now he could do nothing. I cannot say I ever had much faith in the spar plan, and after experience convinced me of its hopelessness. None the less it was Captain C——'s duty to have looked to the spar, and to have tried to save the cutter. He did neither. All I will say is that, if I see him in charge of a ferry-boat when I have to cross the Styx, I shall wait for another turn.

And now the time for decision of those who could swim was short indeed. I, for one, felt that the question of life or death had better be decided one way or the other at once, for another night on board the vessel seemed too dreadful to contemplate; and, in truth, I thought it would mean certain death. My friend and comrade Bell concurred with me that our only chance was an attempt to swim ashore; and we at once prepared to carry out this resolve. I attired myself in a shirt and white trousers, with a flannel vest and flannel drawers underneath. Round my waist I tied a tin of canned milk, and a pipe and some tobacco, with a handkerchief, and then removed my shoes and socks. Before leaving the wreck I went to say farewell to Mr. Stone, the mate, who was still in a low state of despair, poor man, and no wonder! He had a wife and family, and being unable to swim his case was well-nigh hopeless. I tried to cheer him all I could, saying that Bell and I would reach the shore and help in the matter of the spar and line. And so with a goodbye to all we left on board, I slipped down a rope into the surf, followed closely by Bell.

When one is braced for the peril of such an attempt, the danger of it is lost from the mind, and the thoughts are bent on straining every nerve to succeed. Arabs have a saying, 'Say not to thy soul thou wilt not succeed'; and it is a good one. If, moreover, a man has a thought of serving others besides himself, there rises a feeling of exaltation, almost elation, which has probably carried many through imminent peril. Nevertheless, had I known that besides the danger of the surf and breakers, there was a still more appalling one to run, I know not if I should have had the courage to face it. For afterwards I knew that the surf swarmed with sharks.

As soon as Bell and I reached the water a heavy roller overtook us, and parted us for ever. I was subsequently told that, whilst apparently swimming through the surf, he was seen by those on the wreck to throw up his arms suddenly and disappear; and I fear he must have been dragged under by a shark.

The first rolling mass of water which struck me overwhelmed and almost stunned me, turning me completely over and burying me for several seconds. I felt that a few repetitions of such an experience would do for me. When the body is in deadly peril, however, the mind hurries up as a rule; and I seemed to remember having read somewhere that, in such cases, the best thing to do is to throw oneself on one's back with the head towards the approaching waves. This I did when I saw the next roller close to me, and instead of being turned over and buried in the wave, I found myself cast forward on the crest, and lying on my face in a swimming position when the sea passed on. This manœuvre was repeated again and again until, to my joy, my feet touched ground. On attempting to wade towards the dry part of the reef, though, I was swept back by the recoil of the waves, to my horror, into deep water. When well-nigh exhausted, a hencoop passed, narrowly missing my head, and rested in a hollow of the sea close ahead of me. A few strokes, and I had grasped hold of it, and I held on tight until I was cast up on the dry part of the reef, where the friendly outstretched hand of the Frenchman Bonche met mine, and aided my last steps.

Soon afterwards two others succeeded in swimming ashore, the ship's carpenter, Massey, and a Dutch sailor known as Harry, and joined us on the reef. We four then proceeded to the spar, but could not make it secure; and then to the cutter, which being staved in we were unable to save. Unfortunate this, as it might have been the means of rescuing others could we have but dragged it to Bird Island. In the boat we found some carpenter's tools and a bag of nails, however, and these I carried on my shoulder, for the tide was rapidly making and we had to hasten towards the island, wading painfully in bare feet over the sharp coral, which cut them at every step. We were just in time, and I, being last, had to swim the few remaining yards to gain the sandy shore. As I had held on to my bag of nails throughout, I threw myself on the ground utterly exhausted.

When somewhat rested, I took off my trousers and laid them in the sun to dry, but I should have been wiser to keep them on, as

they were appropriated by one of the men ; so, for the rest of my island existence, I was attired in a pair of flannel drawers, a flannel vest, and a handkerchief round my head. It was a cool dress for a tropical climate, but the disadvantage was that the fierce sun burned the arms and legs to blisters and painful sores.

We were six survivors from the *St. Abbs* on Bird Island, the captain, the carpenter, three sailors, and myself the only passenger. The island we had gained was a wretched low-lying spit of sand, perhaps half a mile in diameter, but, oh precious ! it was the resting-place of myriads of sea-fowl which, sitting as they were on eggs, covered the whole extent of the ground. As one walked among them they merely opened their beaks and cawed, and one had almost to kick them out of the way. A strange sight, indeed !

We lay and slept that night on the bare sand, under the starlit heavens, unconscious of the tragedy occurring hard by in the roaring surf. The morning light on June 17 revealed a sad scene. During the night the *St. Abbs* had broken up. The prow alone remained on the reef, tilted up to an almost perpendicular angle ; whilst down to leeward we descried three human figures clinging to a large piece of wreckage. Having no boat we were powerless to help them, and they slowly drifted out of sight. Long after it was ascertained that one of these men had gained a barren rocky islet, where he must have perished from starvation.

The low-lying, circular, sandy island on which we were stranded was little above sea-level, and clearly afforded no hope of containing fresh water. Some scrubby bushes growing at the southwestern side were insufficient to protect us from the sun's fierce rays, but by them we fixed our encampment. We were then, and indeed until rescued, ignorant of our exact position, but we knew we were in the region of the south-east trade wind, with little prospect of any rain falling. Farther north at this season of the year, the south-west monsoon, blowing towards the coast of India, would be laden with moisture and, in fact, heavy rains. As for food, we need have no cause for anxiety, since birds and their eggs were to be had for the lifting up. They seemed all of one species, what I think is called the Noddy. The Booby is a larger bird, which we afterwards found roosting on the higher bushes of Juan de Nuovo Island, and of which we partook freely also.

The want of fresh water, then, was our immediate danger, and it was soon to cause us acute suffering. The cargo of the *St. Abbs* had consisted, in great part, of wines, spirits, beer and oilman's

stores, and also bales of cloth. To this circumstance our ultimate preservation was mainly due; for when the ship broke up, the cases containing these stores were dashed on the coral reef, and many smashed to pieces. The contents, bottles, tins, etc., would be caught in the interstices of the rocks and there remain. When this was discovered, we used to wade out at low tide to the reef, and carry back to our island such eatables and drinkables as we could. And so a small stock of brandy, oil, vinegar, jam, olives, and such like was collected, with a few precious bottles of champagne. The jars and jam-pots became our chief culinary utensils when we obtained fire. For the present, and for some time, however, we lacked fire as well as water, and we had to devour the sea birds and their eggs raw. Not a very appetising food, since the birds were rank and fishy.

Our days passed much as follows: In the early morning some birds and eggs were gathered, as it were, and eaten raw, washed down with whatever liquid was available, and which was served out in equal quantities by one of the men. Sometimes it was brandy, or vinegar, or oil; when lucky a little champagne. The foragers would then sally out and collect what they could find. I was myself unable to join in this work, as the soles of my feet were scarred with wounds, and every step taken was torture. Thus I was relegated to the supply department, and would wander round picking up birds, and collecting a number of good eggs—not freshly laid, you may be sure—and amuse myself by rubbing dry sticks in hopes of striking fire, but quite without success.

On the return of the others from the reef, we would eat the birds and eggs, and another allowance of liquid was then served out and drunk from a coco-nut shell which had been picked up. Now I need hardly say that brandy, vinegar and oil, though moistening the lips, will not quench thirst, and, in fact, aggravate it. Our sufferings consequently soon became intense for want of water. After some days an alleviation of our plight was obtained by kindling a fire by means of a telescope lens found, I think, in someone's trouser pocket, and which was used as a burning-glass. Thereafter our meals were cooked; and we never let that fire go out, watching it as jealously as the Magi did the sacred flame in their Fire Temples.

The foraging parties to the reef brought back some broad cloth also; and eventually two considerable spars were hauled ashore. The cloth was useful to lie on, and cover us of nights, while the spars

proved the means of our escape from Bird Island, and from death by thirst.

When I carried ashore a bag of nails, some carpenter's tools had also been saved; and now the carpenter Massey was set to work to turn the spars into a rough sort of raft. I don't think he made a very good job of it, not being resourceful; but it eventually enabled us to cross to Juan de Nuevo Island with some supplies.

We surviving six persons on Bird Island were certainly a somewhat heterogeneous lot. First the captain, an unprepossessing man at best: attired in short trousers reaching to the knees, a shirt, and a red handkerchief knotted round his head, he was an uncouth figure, and looked the ideal pirate. Next came the ship's carpenter Massey, who, like myself, had saved himself by swimming. He was Scotch, a quiet decent man, rather lachrymose and depressing, but to be excused on the score that he had a wife and family in the old country. The little Frenchman, or rather Jersey man, Bonche, was the best man of us all; *toujours gai* and resourceful, he would, had it been possible, have made even a Booby palatable, and concocted broth from the island grass. The Dutchman, Harry, was of a very violent nature, full of wonderful tales of his past life. From his own account, he had been by turns pirate, slaver, and everything atrocious. But I took his stories *cum grano*, and had an idea that his imagination was stronger than his veracity. He also swam ashore. The seaman Edge was a cockney, and a good honest kind of man, whose real name was Pearce.

Our life on Bird Island can be better described in the poet's words than by any at my command:

'The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the surf,

The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.'

(' Enoch Arden. ')

Thus I bear witness and pay homage to the profound intuition of genius.

One evening, however, there rose a cry, 'A sail!' In the distance down to leeward, there were the white sails of a barque

beating up in our direction. All was excitement; we shouted and waved for all we were worth, although it was madness to hope we could be heard or seen. As the sail receded and faded away from our sight in the setting sun, perhaps a deeper despair descended upon our hearts.

Another episode happened to, let us say, enliven, our island life. One day the Dutchman, fired possibly with brandy, armed himself with a carpenter's axe, and made for the skipper, swearing he would brain him. The captain seized a sword which had been brought ashore, God knows how, and lunged at the Dutchman. Gently came Cinderella's hand on the latter's arm, 'No, Harry, you are not to do that. We are five to one, and will not permit a murder; so throw down your axe.' And he did. Perhaps an item to my credit when my sins are reckoned up!

Days passed. The sun beat fiercely down, causing our exposed legs and arms to blister and break out into sloughing sores. The thirst was awful. If you ever have to choose between death by thirst and death by hunger, choose hunger.

There was ample leisure, as you may suppose, to watch our sea-fowl and their habits. They would fly out in flocks, to great distances from their island home, returning with unerring instinct at sunset. Besides the birds which nested on Bird Island, there were others which lived on Juan de Nuovo. One species, the frigate, or man-of-war, bird, a kind of osprey, I believe, would watch the noddies and boobies from aloft until they dived and caught a fish. Thereupon the pirate would pursue and attack them, forcing them to disgorge their prey, which would be taken by the marauder in mid-air. *Sic vos non vobis*, poor boobies! Thus we might moralise on the strange concatenation of plundering by the stronger from the weaker in this best possible of worlds.

At length a somewhat clumsy raft had been put together; and our plan was to await spring tides and, when the water was at its lowest, attempt to wade with the raft across the reef to Juan de Nuovo, a distance of perhaps five miles. That island was higher, covered with bushes and scrub, and held out hopes of fresh water, failing which our case was indeed desperate.

I think we had been about seventeen days on Bird Island when, all being propitious, we set out on our arduous enterprise, wading over the coral reef and pushing along the raft, to which had been secured all our precious stores. I had tied some cloth about my feet to protect them from the sharp coral; but even so the walking

and wading was very painful, and I was forced at times to cling on to the raft. Occasionally we had to cross deep pools, and then we found ourselves attended by an escort of sharks. Their intentions were good, no doubt, from their point of view, but we could willingly have dispensed with their presence. They proved poor timid things, however, and a splash at their noses easily drove them away. By afternoon we gained the shore of Juan de Nuevo, and lay down to rest before exploring our new dominions. A search party then went forward, and, to our inexpressible relief, discovered pools of muddy fresh water, about half-way up the island !

We found this island to be about three miles long and half a mile wide, covered with brushwood and stunted trees ; while birds were numerous, roosting and nesting on the scrubby trees. Our raft was pushed along the shore through the shallow water, and next morning we reached the farther extremity of the island, where there was an eminence, a stunted palm tree, and some wells of brackish, but drinkable, water. A mat hut, too, was there ; and so, of course, we decided to make that spot our camping ground. We later came upon a cage for turtle in the sea close by, with some live turtle in it. Thus our position and prospects were much improved, and far more hopeful than ever before.

The island was evidently not wholly forsaken and unvisited ; for the first night of our sojourn thereon we were startled by the howling of what seemed to be wild beasts ; and later ascertained that there were some black dogs living in the scrub, but now become shy and savage. They apparently roamed along the shores by night, picking up crabs and such things to maintain life. The carpenter was taken aback one day by meeting the dogs, and returned to camp looking very scared.

Our daily routine was now somewhat varied. The boobies, a larger kind of sea-fowl than those on Bird Island, roosted on the bushes, so we would sally forth each morning armed with sticks to obtain the necessary supply. The birds sat staring stupidly at us, and waited most complacently to be knocked on the head. They were, however, rather scarcer, and we began to fear the supply might soon be exhausted. The frigate was a denizen of this island, too ; and though in shape and flight like a hawk, it has a curious red pouch which it blows out when sitting on trees. The captain brought back one of these birds one day, and, much to our amusement, ate it for his dinner. Judging by its odour, the boobies were evidently comparatively flavourless !

At night we slept in the hut we had discovered. Perhaps our slumbers there would have been less agreeable had we known that previously it was the abode of lepers. And so the weary days wore on, and though our diet was varied by an occasional catch of turtle, it began to tell on our health ; and the desolate feeling of being cut off from the world was becoming unbearable. So much so that we thought of launching out to sea on a raft, to take our chance, rather than to linger on in such a miserable existence.

'Is life worth living,' do you ask ? Try a spell on a deserted island with Hope for your companion, and answer. Again, let it be Despair. Your answer will be different ; you will long for early death.

One night Harry the Dutchman dreamed a dream. At least he told us in the morning he had seen a sail. Perhaps he had the gift of second sight, as so many now appear to have. That same day I was alone near the hut cooking boobies for breakfast when, hearing a shout, I looked up and saw one of the men gesticulating madly and shouting on the look-out hill. The boobies went into the fire, and I was on the hill as fast as young limbs could carry me. Behold a schooner anchoring close to the island. At last deliverance had come !

A small boat manned by negroes, with a white man steering, soon reached the shore. We were accosted by the master of the vessel in French, and immediately made known to him our circumstances. The schooner proved to be the *Marie* from the Seychelles, cruising in search of turtle and tortoise-shell. The master gave us food and clothing, such as his slender stock could spare, and of course agreed to take us off with him. Rice was the best food the *Marie* had, but how truly delicious boiled rice can be !

I think it was July 22, 1855, that we embarked on the *Marie*, having passed thirty-six days on these islands ; and our joy was great when we sailed away from that abode of boobies and other sea-fowl, bound for the Seychelles. The captain of the *Marie* did all in his limited power to rig us out, but hats and shoes were still unknown luxuries. Accustomed to the want of them, we did not mind that. Our food was rice and salt fish, with some turtle brought from Juan de Nuovo. The *Marie* first shaped her course westward towards the Mozambique Channel, in search of a party of negroes who had been left some months previously on an island named Astove, to collect tortoiseshells. The wind was high, the

schooner old and leaky, and the voyage anything but a pleasant trip.

Astove Island was sighted after some days, but no trace of human life could be seen. So the captain steered for the Seychelles, several hundred miles to the north. It was learnt later that the tortoise fishers had been taken off Astove in extremities, owing to the exhaustion of their food supply. We experienced very bad weather and narrowly escaped a second shipwreck, finding ourselves suddenly in shoal water and surrounded by reefs. At length, after ten days on board the leaking vessel, the Seychelles were sighted, and the schooner cast anchor opposite Port Victoria, the chief town of Mahi, the largest of these islands. As soon as the *Marie* had anchored, the Health Officer boarded her, gazed with surprise at the queer-looking passengers, and then went off to make his report.

The Seychelles were administered by a Civil Commissioner, then Captain Wade; but it may be imagined that in my incongruous rig, bare-headed and bare-footed, in a check shirt and very short trousers, I felt rather diffident about presenting myself at Government House. As soon as Capt. Wade heard of our circumstances, however, he most kindly sent for me, and invited me to be his guest; while Captain C—— and the other survivors from the *St. Abbs* also found friendly and kindly hosts. I cannot attempt to describe the goodness and care I received at the hands of Captain Wade and his wife during my protracted stay in their most hospitable house. In Mr. Griffiths, the Magistrate, and his amiable family, I also found most kind friends. In fact, everyone seemed anxious to befriend me and efface the recollection of past misery. Well, indeed, did they succeed; for at the Seychelles I passed some of the happiest days of my life.

The archipelago of the Seychelles is very beautiful, the islands mostly high, and thickly wooded with a great variety of tall and valuable trees. The soil of Mahi is fertile beyond conception, every description of tropical production, spices, coco-nuts, bananas, etc., abounding. The laziness of the population, chiefly French, and Dutch creoles and negroes, prevents this amazing fertility being turned to better account; and in those days the islands contributed but little to trade. On the island named Praslin grows a palm with broad leaves bearing the curious double nut, *Coco de Mer*, which was first discovered when washed up on the shores of Southern India and Ceylon; hence its name. The negroes, liberated slaves

and their descendants, speak a French patois similar to that spoken in Mauritius.

In those days communication with the Seychelles was rather infrequent; and not until more than two months had been spent by me at Government House was I able to embark on a schooner bound for Mauritius, parting with much regret from my kind friends and hosts. The voyage proved tedious, but after three weeks of head winds and calms, the schooner anchored off St. Denis, the principal port of Réunion. There I landed for a few days, after which, by the courtesy of His Excellency the Governor, I was given a passage to Mauritius in the French gunboat *Marceau*. It was early in October 1855 when I landed at Port Louis, where I found hospitable friends in Mr. Douglas, the Attorney-General, his brother the Colonial Secretary, and others to whom I had letters of introduction. I spent a fortnight in Mauritius and then procured a passage to Bombay in a passing sailing-ship, which eventually reached that port in January 1856.

GOD OF HIS FATHERS.

ACHMET AGAH—fat, perspiring, sitting cross-legged on the ground with his back against the mud wall of his dilapidated house in the valley of the Pactolus in Anatolia—laid aside the tube of his narghile and closed his eyes. All afternoon he had been sitting there, watching with gentle interest his wife wielding a heavy and virtually ineffective hoe among the lusty thistles which threatened to extinguish altogether his meagre crop of young barley. He felt tired; just as tired, he thought to himself with a sigh expressive of a mild and fleeting wonder, as if, incredibly, he had been labouring beside her, out there where the fierce rays of the Asiatic summer sun appeared to rebound from the earth in shimmering waves of liquid heat. Achmet Agah closed his eyes and presently slept—soundly, with intermittent trumpetings, one hand reposing upon his ample chest where it had been in the act of stroking his luxuriant beard.

When he woke it was with the sound of a strange voice mingling with his dreams—dreams of a time long ago when he had been, strange to say, an alert and even active youth in the employ of a party of Giaours, infidel foreigners with a passion for delving deep in the ground in search of ‘anticas.’ He opened his eyes and looked up. A man stood before him, but who or what he was Achmet, being but half awake and with the strong sunlight dazzling his sight, could not immediately determine.

‘No, Effendim,’ he murmured drowsily, his mind still enmeshed in the fabric of his dreams. ‘No more were ever found. I have watched carefully, even dug a little now and then—but in vain. I have not forgotten my promise. If ever——’

A burst of laughter interrupted him.

‘Allah, hear him!’ derisively exclaimed the voice of Topal Nouri, Achmet Agah’s nearest neighbour, a lean patriarch whose meddlesome inquisitiveness and, in Achmet Agah’s opinion, indecent progressiveness had been grating upon the smooth surface of Achmet Agah’s tranquillity for more years than he cared to recall. ‘Are you possessed by a demon who borrows your lips for his own mysterious utterances, or am I being honoured with the vast secrets of your vaster brain—O mountain of inert fat?’

Without waiting for an answer, Topal Nouri squatted quickly down opposite Achmet Agah and peered closely into his face.

'What was never found, and where have you been digging?' he asked in a playful tone that did not, however, entirely conceal his eager curiosity.

Achmet Agah slowly blinked his eyes a number of times and then fixed them with a steady bovine gaze upon his neighbour.

'When the donkey brays, wise men do not consider it an invitation to converse,' he remarked detachedly, fumbling, as he spoke, for the mouthpiece of his narghile, which he politely extended towards his visitor.

Topal Nouri sprang up angrily.

'Ingrate!' he shouted, making a scornful gesture in the air as if he brushed Achmet Agah into the uttermost spaces of oblivion. 'Here am I, having toiled to this thrice-accursed hovel out of purest friendship through a heat hotter than Jehennem itself for the purpose of acquainting you with important news, and what is my reward? An insult, not to be borne; an insult, by Allah, which I should have wiped out with blood, your blood—in the old days!'

With a deliberate motion Achmet Agah carried the amber ball of his narghile mouthpiece to his own lips and sucked at it until, after a long minute, faint wisps of smoke rewarded him.

'In the old days,' he remarked at last, casting up his eyes at Topal Nouri with a look of cold indifference, 'men made it a practice to mind their own business. Also, they wore the fez and prayed regularly to Allah.'

With an imprecation unsuited to his venerable grey hairs, Topal Nouri snatched from his head and held under Achmet Agah's nose an example of the cheap oilcloth cap recommended by the statesmen of Angora, and made in Germany.

'You dare to sneer at it—the emblem, one may say, of New Turkey?' he screamed shrilly, beside himself. 'One word from me to the Kaimmakam, and you would be thrown to rot—or worse—into the darkest dungeon in Anatolia.'

Achmet Agah wrinkled up his nose and turned away his face with an expression of deep repugnance.

'A proper emblem of New Turkey!' he exclaimed disgustedly. 'How it stinks!'

Speechless, his whole body shaking with anger, Topal Nouri jammed the cap on his head and strode off, gesticulating fiercely and talking to himself, in the direction from which he had come.

Achmet Agah's little eyes, almost hidden in the bulging fat of his sleek cheeks, followed his progress with mild interest. His expression of disgust was not modified by his contemplation of Topal Nouri's back-view—the nondescript cap, the shoddy European trousers and waistcoat (Topal Nouri wore no coat), revealing in the wide gap between them the major portion of Topal Nouri's shirt-tail.

'Scarecrow!' Achmet Agah scornfully muttered to himself, pleasantly conscious, at the same time, of his own picturesque appearance, garbed, as he was, in the short black-braided blue jacket, like an Eton boy's, broad parti-coloured sash, baggy white breeches to the knee, and bare legs, typical, once, of Anatolian peasants. He even wore a fez, the forbidden headgear of Old Turkey—wore it proudly and constantly, in defiance of the progressive regime which, he considered, would be the ruination of the country. 'Scarecrow!' he repeated with, for him, uncommon energy, spitting copiously, by way of a full stop, in the general direction of Topal Nouri—and of Angora.

Partly because the rays of the declining sun now struck directly into his face, and partly because the recent interview had fatigued his usually dormant emotions, Achmet Agah sighed heavily and closed his eyes. How pleasant it was, he mused, to feel on his back the reflected heat from the mud-bricks of the wall of his house, to be assured at intervals, by the faint sound of his wife's hoe striking a stone, that the weeding of his barley was proceeding, and, finally, to feel that he, the most lethargic of men and a local butt, had struck a blow for conservatism—'for Islam,' as he proudly murmured, with closed eyes, a phrase the exact meaning of which he would have been unable to explain to an inquirer, but one which he associated with the old order of things in Turkey, an order now sadly changed, and changing more every day. How pleasant and easy and secure had been his life in former times—in the days before the world was upset by wars, when a man could dress as he liked, live as he liked, and when, if he chose to work, as even Achmet Agah occasionally—very occasionally—had done, the reward of his labours at the end of a week quite often took the shape of good hard minted gold, a comforting commodity as fabulous, nowadays, as a jinnee in a bottle. Yes, those were the days! Especially the days when—Achmet Agah was slipping back into the dreams which had been broken by the appearance of Topal Nouri—when he, together with a score or more of villagers, had wielded a pick under the direction of that kindly foreigner,

the learned archaeologist with the friendly smile and the inexhaustible purse, who once had poured into his cupped hands such a staggering reward—all shining, chinking, gold pieces—for the crudely painted terra-cotta sarcophagus he, Achmet Agah, had ploughed up by chance in his own fields. He had been promised double the amount if he could find another, but, dig where he might, on his own property or elsewhere, he never did. Yet the foreigner would not give up hope. When he paid off Achmet and the others for the last time, before he sailed away across the Black Water to his own home, he drew Achmet Agah apart and gave him a paper with writing upon it. 'If ever,' said he, in his funny ungrammatical Turkish, 'you come across such another antica, or even a fragment of one, take it to the Consul of my country in Smyrna, together with this note. He will reward you in my name—give you a greater sum than you received before. It shall be so because you, who are my friend, are now my colleague also.' Then he had seized Achmet Agah's hand and shaken it violently after the embarrassing custom of all Giaours.

Achmet Agah sighed windily and mournfully in his sleep, for never, since that day, so many years ago, had he discovered even the smallest particle of another sarcophagus to make glad the heart of that pleasant man whose memory, quite apart from any thought of rewards, he cherished with the affection of a son for a father.

A shadow, falling across Achmet Agah's face, woke him. He looked up and saw, standing before him once more, Topal Nouri.

'Having swallowed my anger,' announced the latter in a whining tone intended to convey reproach, 'I am returned—for your sake.'

Achmet Agah responded with a prodigious yawn. At length he added testily:

'Then, for the sake of Allah—who, incidentally, vouchsafes to me the sleep which you continually take away—tell me why.'

Thus adjured, Topal Nouri lost no time in squatting down face to face with Achmet Agah.

'Have you heard the news?' he demanded, his nervous fingers telling rapidly over and over again the string of amber beads he carried.

Achmet Agah tossed back his head and clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth.

'News? Allah forbid!' he exclaimed piously, yawning to demonstrate his complete indifference. 'Yet——' He looked

hard at Topal Nouri with an assumption of hopeful innocence. 'Is Angora fallen in ruins, and a Sultan risen from the dust?'

Topal Nouri rocked himself violently on his heels in a sudden tempest of indignation.

'Mocker! Witling!' he chattered furiously into Achmet Agah's placid countenance, leaning quickly forward for the purpose. 'A day will come when you——'

He interrupted himself to shrug his shoulders up to his ears and fling out his hands, palms upward, in a gesture of despair.

'But why do I waste my breath on one who is blind and deaf and utterly without comprehension?'

'Why, indeed?' murmured Achmet Agah politely, ignoring, whether consciously or unconsciously it would have been difficult to say, the rhetorical nature of the question.

Topal Nouri regarded him sourly, momentarily deflated.

'Why?' he repeated, in a lower and rather hesitating key. 'Because—because it is my duty, as it is the duty of all loyal and understanding Turks, to open the eyes of their brothers who will not see, who persist in wallowing in the old traditions, like buffaloes caught in a quagmire, when all over Turkey, at the bidding of the Ghazi, whom Allah preserve, is dawning the new and glorious era of Turkish emancipation—Turkish progress—enlightenment—freedom of the individual, especially women—advancement of science—democracy—League of Nations—down with imperialism——'

Topal Nouri came to a stop, confused by the dazzling and patriotic visions jostling one another in his inadequate mind, his tongue entangled in the string of high-sounding words which he was uttering with the empty glibness of an intelligent parrot.

'Ma'shallah!' ejaculated Achmet Agah admiringly, bowing his head with exaggerated deference. 'It is the Ghazi himself who speaks, not my old friend Topal Nouri. All hail, Deliverer! I am convinced; my eyes are opened. No longer am I a buffalo—nor yet a camel—nor any other inferior member of the animal kingdom. Not even a Greek or an Armenian am I. I am transmogrified. I am that transcendent being—like Topal Nouri—a Kemalist. Quick! Fetch me ill-fitting garments *à la Franca* from the sweatshops of Europe; an oilcloth cap with an extra special stink! Unveil my wife! Defile the memory of the Sultan! Bring pork, and wine, and——'

Topal Nouri clapped his hands over his ears and leaped to his feet.

'May you burn—dropsical and envenomed toad!' he spluttered, quivering with senile indignation.

'And your news, O eminent zoologist?' blandly inquired Achmet Agah, stirring with one finger and with studious detachment the grey embers lying on the tobacco in the bowl of his narghile.

'Yes, that you shall hear!' retorted Topal Nouri. 'If only to show you the enlightened care with which the Government you scorn now seeks to promote our welfare and avert disaster.'

Achmet Agah nodded encouragingly.

'Know then,' declaimed Topal Nouri with dramatic slowness, 'that swarms of devouring locusts are advancing from Egypt. On the fourth day, so say the experts of the Government, they will reach this valley. No green thing in their path—no blade of grass, no kernel of barley like yours in this field—will remain.'

'It is too much,' remarked Achmet Agah in grateful accents, 'if it is thus that an omniscient Government showers blessings upon us.'

'—will remain,' Topal Nouri continued in a louder key, 'unless,' here he threw back his shoulders and thrust out his beard with an air of triumph, 'unless the instructions of the Government are implicitly followed.'

'And they are?' inquired Achmet Agah with a show of interest.

'Let every landowner dig a trench of considerable depth around his fields,' chanted Topal Nouri, like one who recalled to memory the words of a proclamation. 'The locusts, arriving in an exhausted condition and advancing upon his fields by hopping and crawling, will fall in myriads into the trench, where they can be easily destroyed either by filling in the trench or, better, by spraying them with liquid fire—appliances for which purpose will be supplied upon application to the vilayet authorities.'

Topal Nouri paused to mark the effect of his words—which was negligible, to judge by the Sphinx-like repose of Achmet Agah's countenance.

'Furthermore,' he doggedly proceeded, 'communities are urged to band together for the purpose of trenching and destroying by fire. Only thus, namely by unselfish co-operation, shall some, if not all, crops be saved.'

Achmet Agah sucked thoughtfully at his narghile the while his eyes rested mournfully upon his barley which a playful evening

zephyr was rippling so that it resembled the waters of a green lake.

'All the village has begun the trenching—in co-operation,' added Topal Nouri persuasively, 'and most, including myself, have applied for a fire machine. Will you join with us?'

'Dig, do you mean?' asked Achmet Agah incredulously, settling himself more comfortably against the wall, where his broad back, during countless past hours of leisure in the same spot, had worn quite a hollow in the soft mud bricks.

'Of course,' replied Topal Nouri shortly. 'Have I not said—'

'More than enough to set my ears to ringing for a twelvemonth,' broke in Achmet Agah, holding up one hand in protest. For some little time he sat thus, lost in meditation. Then he continued in a small and gentle voice:

'Tell me, Topal Nouri. Who is it gives, and can also take away?'

Topal Nouri snorted contemptuously.

'Allah, doubtless,' he answered, shrugging his shoulders.

'Doubtless,' agreed Achmet Agah dryly. 'And He is my answer.'

'What do you mean?' exclaimed Topal Nouri.

'I mean,' replied Achmet Agah with the voice of an imam intoning in a mosque, 'that Allah has given to me my field of barley. He may now see fit to send locusts to devour it. It is a pity. But who am I—who are you, or the villagers, or the vilayet authorities, or the Ghazi himself at Angora—to question the purposes of Allah, or to interfere with their consummation? What will be, will be. By this hand——' Achmet Agah displayed a palm as soft and plump as a woman's. 'By this hand shall fall no single tired locust journeying from Egypt by way of my barley field to God knows where. Let Allah take away if He will, for it is well known that He will provide also.'

'Now by my head! This shall be reported!' ejaculated Topal Nouri, rising angrily to his feet.

'Aye,' agreed Achmet Agah courteously, 'by your head—already sufficiently goat-like—let it be bleated to the four winds of heaven that Achmet Agah, poor benighted soul, relies upon Allah—who never yet has failed him.'

Topal Nouri, unable to utter the torrent of words, execrations, blasphemies, which threatened to choke him, turned on his heel

and stumbled wrathfully away. After he had covered some hundreds of yards he regained his powers of speech, and Achmet Agah could hear him, long after he had disappeared from sight between the straggling hedgerows flanking the stony track to the village, venting at the top of his voice his opinion of Achmet Agah and all his works—an opinion much enriched by a startling series of zoological analogies, real and imaginary.

On the fourth day, even as it had been predicted by Topal Nouri, came the locusts. Flying in clouds high above the earth, they darkened the sun; settling down upon the smiling valley where dwelt Achmet Agah and his neighbours, they smothered from sight every living green thing except the cypresses enclosing the tiny graveyard.

Achmet Agah, sitting cross-legged on the ground with his back braced against the mud-brick wall of his house, contemplated the phenomenon with pious wonder.

‘Ma’shallah!’ he would ejaculate from time to time, to which, like an echo, his wife, huddled at his elbow, would answer with a low heartrending yowl, at the same time covering completely her face with her veil and sprinkling her bowed head with a pinch of dust.

Now and again Achmet Agah would raise his eyes to scan the more distant view. Here and there he could see, labouring with a feverish energy that caused him to break into a gentle and sympathetic perspiration, small groups of villagers engaged in trenching, or squirting aimlessly with feeble streams of liquid fire to the accompaniment of frantic yells and much black smoke. Achmet Agah would sigh then and shake his head with a pitying smile.

And all through the day the locusts flew, and crawled, and hopped, and battened upon the green things in the valley until, towards sunset, the bare brown earth was visible where, in the morning, young crops had stood.

Achmet Agah, with vast gestures and vaster groans, stretched himself where he sat and then got to his feet with the ponderous movements of an unwilling camel.

‘Great is Allah!’ he pronounced in a ringing voice as if he addressed an unseen multitude. Then: ‘Let us go and look upon His handiwork,’ he deigned to add over his shoulder to his wife, ‘—but in silence, O mother of distressing caterwaulings!’

Achmet Agah had not set foot in his barley field since that distant day when, having borrowed a wooden plough and an aged

ox from a neighbour, he had harnessed to it, in addition, his small donkey and his strong young wife, and had condescended to trace with it the wavering furrows which were to repay him, he never doubted, an hundredfold. He now walked in the field with a curious sense of adventure, as if, for example, he had never trodden it before; as if, moreover, he was desecrating with profane feet the actual scene of an awful and divine manifestation. Very gingerly he moved forward, endeavouring, unsuccessfully, to avoid crushing the locusts which still covered the ground like a living and restless carpet. The completeness with which every last grain of barley had disappeared astonished him. For an instant, and one instant only, a wave of anger against the locusts, against Allah, surged up in his heart. An instant later, filled with shame and a great and superstitious fear, he plumped down on his knees and bowed his forehead to the earth in the direction of Mecca. He would have remained in that position, contrite and prayerful, for an indefinite period had not an exclamation of wonder uttered by his wife disturbed him.

'Ma'shallah!—a miracle!' she ejaculated, tugging from behind at her husband's sash with as much effect, from the point of view of pulling him back on his knees, as she would have had upon a devout elephant.

Achmet Agah lifted his head a few inches above the ground and looked cautiously about him. He perceived nothing remarkable.

'What? Where? Impious magpie!' he grunted peevishly, sitting back on his heels to secure a wider view.

'The locusts! They are gone!' whispered his wife eagerly, pointing into the sky.

Achmet Agah followed the direction of her finger.

By Allah, she spoke the truth! There they went, flying northward like a dark cloud against the evening sky!

Achmet Agah bent his eyes upon the ground before him. Not a single locust was to be seen! No, not one! The earth, everywhere visible through the short green stubble, all that remained of his barley, was as bare of life as the sole of his foot!

Achmet Agah's wondering gaze passed from his ruined and empty field to the diminishing flight of locusts and back again innumerable times.

'Ma'shallah!' he exclaimed at frequent intervals, his countenance growing more rueful with every fresh observation he took of the ground before him.

Suddenly his eyes remained fixed on the spot where he had bowed his head. They grew round, and rounder. He leaned impetuously down and with both hands began hastily to scratch at something imbedded in the earth.

'Allah be praised a thousand times ten thousand!' he breathed, dizzy with excitement.

He jerked his head over his shoulder and glanced at his wife who crouched fearfully behind him, convinced that her husband had taken leave of his senses.

'Go!' ordered Achmet Agah in a tense peremptory whisper, 'fetch me your hoe—a pick—a shovel—anything with which I may dig.'

The red ball of the sun slid down behind a distant mountain peak; light failed; the stars came out; and at last the moon, salmon-coloured and enormous, rose out of the east and hung above the little valley like—in Achmet Agah's grateful imagination—the eye of God intent upon the activities of His humble favourite. And still—feverishly, with many references, pious and otherwise, to his good fortune and to the hardness of the dry ground—Achmet Agah, bathed in sweat and with blistered palms, delved and shovelled and scratched and scraped in the middle of his barley field.

It was nearly midnight when, with infinite care, Achmet Agah dragged from the hole he had made—a hole deep and, in the moonlight, black as a grave—an almost perfect specimen of a painted terra-cotta sarcophagus of the type called 'Clazomenae.' With a sigh of mingled weariness and satisfaction he sat down on the ground and contemplated it. Ma'shallah! There it was! A treasure more valuable than its weight in gold! A brother indeed, even a more perfect and more ornate brother, of the one he had found so many years ago, the one which had so pleased his friend, the foreign archaeologist, and the reward for which had enabled him to acquire this field wherein he sat, and his house, and his donkey, and his meek young wife! How infinitely great was Allah—not to mention the magnitude of His faithful servants, the locusts!

Faint with gratitude and pride and happiness, Achmet Agah long continued to sit in the moonlight gloating over his find and wagging his head like a china mandarin who never intended to leave off.

At daybreak Achmet Agah borrowed a camel by the simple

expedient of unhobbling the first one he came across on the grazing slopes. It subsequently developed that the beast was the property of Topal Nouri, but Achmet Agah always protested, in later days, that his hand had been guided solely by chance—or possibly by Allah, who was, after all, better qualified than he was to pick out by the half-light of dawn a strong and healthy animal. Before the sun was up he was astride his donkey, in his hand the camel's leading rope, his face turned towards Smyrna. The camel bore an unusual load ; a crude deal coffin lashed athwart his hump with many turns of goat's hair rope.

The idea of that coffin had come to Achmet like an inspiration direct from Allah when, sated at last with staring spellbound at the treasure he had unearthed, he found himself at his wit's end to devise a means of getting it to the coast without discovery, for well he knew that the sight of such a rare 'antica,' or even the suspicion of it, in the possession of a humble peasant like himself would render it an easy prey to the first petty official he might encounter. As soon as the first stunning effects of his inspiration had worn off, Achmet Agah, moving at a pace that brought forth gasps of anguish from his unaccustomed lungs, lumbered to the courtyard of the village mosque where, grim to look at in the moonlight, were piled many crude coffins in readiness for the next inevitable epidemic of cholera. Quickly selecting the largest, he bore it painfully home—staggering under its weight ; panting like a grampus ; streaming at every pore. It was Allah's crowning dispensation that the coffin received the Clazomenæ sarcophagus as if it had been made for it. Achmet Agah forthwith dropped to his knees and gave thanks, loud and long—so long, indeed, that his wife, obediently praying beside him, fell sound asleep at the end of what was, approximately, her hundredth genuflexion.

The events incident to Achmet Agah's journey to the coast, what he did there, and how he returned, do not require narration. One curious rumour, however, kept reaching the village from various sources even long after Achmet Agah had returned to his anxious wife ; a rumour, namely, that Achmet Agah's wife was dead. 'Why,' the bearers of the information would exclaim when it was pointed out to them that Achmet Agah's wife was, on the contrary, most certainly alive, might even then be seen, if the purveyor of gossip happened to be standing where he could obtain a view of Achmet Agah's domain, wielding some agricultural implement, or perhaps engaged in weaving in her doorway, 'Why,

it's impossible! She *must* be dead! Was not Achmet Agah seen on the road at such and such a place leading a camel bearing a coffin, and did he not say it was his wife's coffin which he was taking to Smyrna where she was born?'

Now Achmet Agah was an honest Turk. To his credit let it be said that when he returned home he lost no time in repairing to the mosque and paying the Imam for a coffin he had abstracted in a moment of haste on behalf, he said, of his wife who required it—Allah bear witness to the extraordinary crotchets of women!—as a gift to a relative in Smyrna.

Once again Achmet Agah sat without his house pulling sometimes at his narghile, othertimes dropping into a refreshing doze. During his wakeful intervals his eyes would rest with evergreen satisfaction upon his barley field, now freshly ploughed and harrowed, the hole in the middle whence he had removed the Clazomenæ sarcophagus filled up as long ago as the very night of its making; upon a plough, his very own, brilliant still in all the glory of new and gaudy paint; upon the two white oxen stamping their feet and shaking their heads to keep off the flies in the shade of a plane tree; upon his wife beating the new rugs which were so soft to the tread, like walking on river sand in the bed of the Pactolus, her thoughts divided between the attraction of the new necklace of silver coins at her throat and the varnished splendour of the sewing machine indoors which she had not the remotest idea how to use.

'Allah kerim!' murmured Achmet Agah, closing his eyes and letting his chin fall upon his swelling chest with a contented sigh.

In the midst of a dream, now grown familiar, compounded of the noisy streets of Smyrna, the cool rooms of a foreign Consulate, the kindly Consul himself counting into Achmet Agah's hands more banknotes than he had ever seen in his life before, a voice intruded.

Achmet Agah opened his eyes and beheld Topal Nouri, rather out-at-elbows, careworn, surprisingly deferential, standing before him.

'Selam!' repeated Topal Nouri, his right hand fluttering from heart to lips to forehead in a gesture of salutation.

'Eyvallah!' replied Achmet Agah graciously, indicating the bare ground in front of him as a suitable spot for Topal Nouri to seat himself, and proffering the tube of his narghile.

Topal Nouri accepted both invitations with an air of gratitude,

casting at the same time a malevolent eye at the new plough, at the two white oxen, at the rugs, and at the necklace of Achmet Agah's wife glinting so brightly in the sun.

'I am come to ask a favour,' said Topal Nouri, when he had drawn a few ceremonial whiffs of smoke, speaking as if the words choked him as they issued from his throat.

'Allah grant that I can grant it,' answered Achmet Agah encouragingly.

'A loan is required——'

Topal Nouri hesitated, looked hopefully at a point about one foot above Achmet Agah's head.

Achmet Agah nodded sympathetically, reserving to himself, however, a short inward chuckle.

'To such a strong supporter as you are, doubtless the Government will advance——' he began.

'Allah curse the Government!' shouted Topal Nouri with sudden fury, and so loud that the two white oxen turned their heads to regard him with mild curiosity.

Achmet Agah's eyebrows shot upward in genuine astonishment.

'May Sheytan's ears be stopped lest he hear you!' he gasped charitably, not at all sure that he had heard aright.

'Let him, rather, prick them and give me heed!' Topal Nouri retorted.

'Why, in Allah's name?' demanded Achmet Agah, hiding the beginning of a smile behind his huge hand. 'What has the Government done—the admirable Government which taught you how to destroy locusts, to save your crops——?'

'Save our crops!' Topal Nouri interjected with a bitter sneer. 'Do you presume to mock me, or is your perception so blunted that you do not yet know that trench as we might, squirt as we might with the Government's thrice-accursed flame-projectors, not one field belonging to the village was saved—not one acre—not one bushel of grain—not one ear—not even one kernel?'

'Ma'zallah! Shocking!' muttered Achmet Agah, casting up his eyes to heaven to emphasise his commiseration.

'Flame-projectors!' repeated Topal Nouri sarcastically, baring his teeth like a dog to illustrate the degree of anger which the mention alone of these fiery engines provoked in him. 'Was ever a name so belied, or again, so justified? When the locusts came, what happened? Those accursed engines of Sheytan gave forth black smoke enough to plunge into darkness all Anatolia, but of destructive flame not so much as would incommode a flea! But

when, in the shadow of my house, I tinkered with the one loaned to me, it suddenly erupted like a fiery mountain, setting alight my house, my sheds, everything that would burn—including the hair of my few poor goats, who now go about the world in a shameful and unnatural state of nakedness !’

‘Ma’zallah !—I had not heard !’ exclaimed Achmet Agah, closing his eyes to veil the emotions evoked by the mental picture of Topal Nouri’s unfortunate livestock.

Topal Nouri eyed him askance.

‘It is a sin to lie,’ he remarked coldly, laying aside the tube of Achmet Agah’s narghile to express his offended state.

‘The mercy of Allah does not come to an end—nor yet your politeness,’ countered Achmet Agah, taking up the narghile tube with an air of injured innocence.

Topal Nouri snorted disdainfully, prepared to rise, then thought better of it.

‘Nay, bear with me,’ he murmured, suddenly humble, with a wry smile intended to be ingratiating. ‘I am a ruined man, a beggar, who knows well that you have heard nothing of his misfortune—in spite of the fact that from this spot where we are sitting even an owl could see, in broad daylight, the ruins of my dwelling. Yet how should you have heard—or seen, you who unaccountably float upon a cloud of golden prosperity high above the heads of the impoverished men of this valley ? What is the secret, O Croesus of the Age ? What miracle have you performed ?’ In an unguarded moment Topal Nouri’s rebellious tongue outran his discretion. ‘What dreadful crime have you committed to gain——’

Achmet Agah’s eyes flashed with a sudden and rare anger.

‘Now, by my head——!’ he burst out, seizing the glass bowl of the narghile as if he had every intention of instantly hurling it into Topal Nouri’s face.

The latter sprang to his feet and backed hastily away, bowing obsequiously meanwhile.

‘Restrain—restrain your impetuous anger,’ he faltered. ‘As Allah hears me, I did but joke.’

Achmet Agah hesitated, then lowered the glass bowl with the shadow of a great regret upon his severe countenance.

‘Wrinkles of laughter crack my cheeks,’ he said presently, retaining his grasp on the bowl and regarding Topal Nouri with bleak and watchful eyes.

Topal Nouri slowly and cautiously retraced his steps.

'Let us come to business,' he suggested, remaining on his feet in front of Achmet Agah and keeping a wary eye upon the hand clutching the narghile bowl. 'As I have said, I am a ruined man. There remains nothing but my devastated fields which march with yours, a wife, and a few singed goats. Will you advance me money—at a reasonable interest?'

Achmet Agah threw back his head and clicked his tongue.

'Appeal to your Government—now that the Turkish millennium has arrived.'

'The Government!' snapped Topal Nouri with trenchant disdain. 'What can one hope for from a band of robbers who now demand payment for the use of the flame-projectors "loaned" to us; who declare that I, Topal Nouri, must pay in full for the never-to-be-sufficiently execrated instrument which destroyed my house and eventually itself? No. I appeal to you, the favourite of Allah the Compassionate. What sum will you lend me—perhaps even forgoing interest in the name of charity?'

Achmet Agah laid one forefinger against his forehead and appeared to consider deeply.

'Not a single piastre,' he announced at last, with the air of a man come to the end of an intricate calculation.

'What?' shrieked Topal Nouri, actually leaping into the air in an excess of passion, as if he had been stung in a tender part by an infuriated wasp.

'I have spoken,' replied Achmet Agah mildly, and with a charming smile full of sweet tolerance. 'But I will give you——'

He paused.

Topal Nouri stood still with his mouth open, his two hands arrested above his head in a gesture of dramatic appeal to unseen powers of vengeance.

'I will give you,' repeated Achmet Agah, with a graceful flourish of an open palm, 'a piece of good advice.'

A richer red appeared upon Topal Nouri's congested face; his hands trembled above his head as if with shaking palsy. He listened intently.

'Hereafter, put your trust in Allah, the Mighty, the All-seeing, the All-wise—and not in any Government.'

A piercing scream, thick and prolonged, shattered to a considerable distance, even as far as the village, the peace of that afternoon.

'Vampire!—Buzzard!—Distended spawn of a poisonous lizard!' screeched Topal Nouri, whirling his arms about his head

and trampling insensibly upon the bare ground until the dust began to rise like smoke from under his furious slippers. 'May your house be accursed, and your progeny leprous!—May your——'

A white froth appeared at the corners of his mouth; his arms dropped to his sides; he staggered, spun round like a dying top, and abruptly collapsed on the ground, where, after sundry convulsive twitchings, he lay still.

Achmet Agah observed him intently, bending only a little forward from his seated position for the purpose. He was relieved to see that Topal Nouri continued to breathe quite regularly if rapidly, as was not strange after his recent exertions.

Achmet Agah's wife crept timidly to her husband's side.

'Is he dead?' she whispered fearfully, her wide brown eyes peering anxiously over her veil at the dusty form lying at her husband's feet.

'As dead as a dried herring,' replied Achmet Agah emphatically, in a voice unnecessarily loud and clear. He was rewarded, as he had expected to be, by an involuntary flutter of Topal Nouri's eyelids.

'He was a great Kemalist, but a man of little faith in Allah,' Achmet Agah continued, musing aloud. 'He might have been many things. He might have become, for example, a celebrated zoologist—ornithologist—even an insectologist, for he had much to do with locusts.'

The body of Topal Nouri executed a sharp twitch or two, but Achmet Agah appeared not to remark it.

His wife seized him by the sleeve and pointed a shaking finger at Topal Nouri.

'Did you not see?' she exclaimed excitedly. 'He is not——'

Achmet Agah shook her roughly off.

'Peace!' he boomed at her, frowning horribly. 'But, speaking of insects——'

Achmet Agah paused to bend a particularly triumphant and searching look at Topal Nouri.

'Speaking of insects, O Pearl of my Prosperity, bring to me now, here upon my knees, that I may feast my eyes upon them, the sources of my present incalculable wealth.'

Once more the body of Topal Nouri quivered and twitched as if it had been brought in contact with a powerful electric current. The head, which had been facing skyward, rolled to one side and in such a fashion that Topal Nouri, had his eyes then been open, would have looked straight at Achmet Agah.

Achmet Agah's wife hurried into the house, to reappear almost immediately with a small brass birdcage which she gently placed upon her husband's knees. The bars of the cage, too wide apart to imprison effectively the occupants—half a dozen wretched locusts—were supplemented by a covering of mosquito netting.

'Have they been plied with milk—and honey—unstinted quantities of the finest millet seed?' inquired Achmet Agah, holding up the cage against the sky in order that he, as well as anyone else who might be looking—even if that person was forced by circumstance to gaze upward from the ground—might best observe the captives in it.

'Every hour does this hand replenish their food, as my lord has ordered,' replied Achmet Agah's wife, with soft humility.

'It is well,' pronounced Achmet Agah, placing the cage on the ground before him—and about three feet in front of Topal Nouri's nose.

Then he rose and mightily stretched himself.

'Let us go now,' he said to his wife, moving ponderously off as he spoke, 'to the praying place behind the house, where we will give thanks once more to Allah for his many blessings and especially for his excessive generosity—touching locusts.'

When, at the expiration of a quarter of an hour, Achmet Agah and his wife returned, they found the space before the house empty, except for a smashed and twisted brass birdcage with half a dozen dead locusts inside it.

The woman rushed forward with a smothered cry. Kneeling over the remains of the cage, she turned terrified eyes upon her husband, trembling to think what he would do, quite probably to her, in his great anger.

But Achmet Agah, smiling serenely, only sat himself down on the ground with his back against the mud wall of his house—at a spot where there was a worn shallow niche that seemed to fit him exactly—and pointed to the dead ashes in his narghile.

'Bring fresh tobacco, O Dove of my Delight,' he commanded gently, in a purring voice. 'As for the six messengers of Allah in that unaccountably battered receptacle you hold in your hands, give them decent burial in the middle of my barley field. Thus, by fertilising the earth, shall they continue to assist us—by the grace of Allah, who never yet has failed me.'

WILLIAM RANSTED BERRY.

THE ABANDONMENT OF MEDICINE.

COMPLACENT paragraphs in the daily Press from time to time encourage a belief that we are living in an age of medical progress. The 'remarkable advance in medical science' has indeed become something of a shibboleth, and courage is required in those who will not pronounce it. Yet it is worth serious inquiry whether there is not some misunderstanding on the part of those who habitually write and speak on these matters. 'Medicine,' wrote Bacon, 'is a science which hath been more professed than laboured and yet more laboured than advanced; the labour having been, in my judgment, rather in circle than in progression.' We are certainly in no less favourable a position than Bacon to observe the cyclical character of medical practice. The Greeks, who slept in the temple of Aesculapius and told their dreams to the priest, or who sought health from the rays of the sun, can join hands across the centuries with the present-day patients of the psycho-analyst or visitors to the 'heliotherapy' clinic. Far be it from us to deny the value of these methods, or to restrict the freedom of the physician to use them where they are indicated. But what is medicine? Are these things central or are they accessory? If other branches of human knowledge have escaped from the law of 'the eternal return,' is it not precisely because they have come under the direction of the scientific spirit, which is essentially a creation of the modern mind? In astronomy, in physics, in chemistry, the line of demarcation between the scientific period and the pre-scientific is clear enough; in medicine it is non-existent. Some of our most eminent doctors have freely confessed as much, and argued the impossibility of bringing medicine, which deals with variable human material, within the limitations of the scientific method. Doctors are far less fond than journalists of talking about 'medical science.' Yet, in face of the achievements of the scientific method in other departments, one is reluctant to acquiesce in this exclusion of medicine from its sphere of usefulness.

We return to our question: What is medicine? and we suggest as answer: 'The employment of medicines for the cure of disease.' Unless medical studies are to be arbitrarily excluded from the domain of science, we ought to be able in these days to extend our

definition to read : 'The employment of medicines for the cure of disease, according to the methods of science.' Adopting such a standpoint, what indications of medical progress can we honestly claim to see ?

In matters of health and disease it may reasonably be claimed that the present is an age of inquiry and research. We have cancer research, elaborate inquiries, financed by American millionaires, into the aetiology of the common cold, investigations into the nature and causation of rheumatism. Incidentally, the very terms in which these inquiries are commended to the public present a striking criticism of medical practice up to the present moment. Many confiding patients have consulted general practitioners and experts because they have suffered from rheumatism. A colossal aggregate sum must have been paid and received before the revelation was made that the medical faculty knows neither the cause nor the cure of this complaint. The literature of the subject is enormous ; it is a little discouraging to learn that it is based on 'a plentiful lack of knowledge.'

Let us not press that point unduly. Inquiry, the patient collection of facts, is undoubtedly a legitimate part of scientific procedure, and *felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*. Science demands, however, that the inquiry shall be according to definite principles. We must define science, not merely as knowledge, but as organised, co-ordinated knowledge. Are there any general principles at the back of these multifarious inquiries which so greatly impress the newspapers ? One result of the existence of the 'unregistered practitioner' has been to draw from a number of leading medical men statements of general principle, of which we might otherwise have been deprived. Lord Dawson of Penn has on various occasions laid down a principle, which he evidently regards as axiomatic, and which appears to be so regarded by the majority of those who write on the subject. We are convinced, however, that it is a fallacy, and that, until its fallacious character is recognised, there is no serious hope of advance.

The principle in question may be expressed in various ways. 'Diagnosis is the first essential in sound medical treatment.' 'An inquiry into the causes of diseases is the necessary preliminary to their cure.' These, and similar remarks, pass, as we have said, almost unchallenged ; their truth is assumed to be self-evident. But what is the verdict of experience ? Has discovery of the cause of a disease been found to point to its cure ? It is many years

since Koch discovered the bacillus of tuberculosis, but the annual death roll from the disease, though diminishing, continues formidable, and it would be difficult to show that the diminution which has occurred owes anything to Koch's aetiological discovery. The position may be illustrated by a typical case which comes to mind. It is a case of forty years' suffering from tubercular abscesses in hip, thigh, and knee, which had resisted all orthodox treatment. For the last ten years the patient had not been able to stand on his feet. Now, as a result of purely medical treatment, without any change of diet whatever or change in his mode of living, he is able to walk across the room without his crutches, is even able to join in a game of billiards or to stand on a ladder pruning his trees, and the recurring inflammation of the knee has vanished. If it has been possible to effect this after forty years of suffering, how much easier would it have been to cure him in the initial stages, had his doctors included the study of curative medicine in their professional training. A limited success may be conceded to serum-therapy in a few acute diseases of which diphtheria is the most striking, but no bacteriologist will deny that the early hopes of these methods have been bitterly disappointed, while the whole field of chronic diseases remains untouched. The real advance in modern years has been in diagnosis, and it is an amazing monument to human patience and energy, but therapeutics lags behind, with no indication of catching up, so that experience compels us to ask whether there is not a flaw in the theory that knowledge of causes is the road to cure.

What, in practice, does differential diagnosis amount to? Simply the finding of a name for a set of symptoms—the multiplication of labels. A great deal of patient research may lie behind the ability to distinguish a case of *tabes dorsalis* from one of disseminate sclerosis, but if neither is curable, where is the advantage? Was not Matthew Arnold well advised when he wrote:

‘ Nor bring, to see me cease to live,
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
To shake his sapient head and give
The ill he cannot cure a name ’ ?

No student of the history of human thought can help realising the importance of method. No amount of intellectual energy will secure practical results if the question has not been properly posited; and the disproportion between the intellectual energy devoted to

the study of disease and the results, measured in methods of cure, is glaring. It establishes a strong presumption that the method of approach is wrong. Hence our inability to wax enthusiastic over the endless multiplication of inquiries, all upon lines which have hitherto proved so barren.

What is the fault, and where is the remedy? We suggest that the fault is the abandonment of medicine, in the sense in which we have defined the term, and that the remedy lies in its full and scientific study. The belief that drugs have a curative effect on the human body must be as old as human thought. The son of Sirach in the noble passage in Ecclesiasticus xxxviii., beginning with the words: 'Honour the physician for the need thou hast of him,' declares: 'The most high hath created medicines out of the earth, and a wise man will not abhor them.' Doubtless the primitive use of drugs provokes a smile to-day, as do those astrological speculations which preceded the modern science of astronomy; but the study of the heavenly bodies has not been abandoned. Why has the study of medicine? Nobody will be so fatuous as to deny that drugs have a powerful effect on the human body. A grain of arsenic or strychnine will clear up any lingering doubts on that point, and the doubter will disappear with the doubt. Drugs are used every day by orthodox doctors to modify the functions of the body. Why should it be tacitly assumed that in an orderly universe this potent fact of drug action on the human system obeys no law, can be reduced to no scientific system? The specific action of drugs on the human organism must appear to an intelligent observer to be a very dignified and useful object of human study, but amid all the inquiries and investigations it seems to be left in the cold. Medical men will study diet, radiology, psychology, anything but medicine. We must except from this statement the believers in homœopathy, which, however, we cannot defend owing to scientific objection to its theories. To use the jargon of the day, the orthodox representatives of modern medicine appear to suffer from an inferiority complex. The present writer recalls a visit from a Colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps, during the war, with a request for 'a tip for rheumatism.' We do not find chemists or physicists, engineers or mariners asking for 'tips,' thereby placing their science or practice on the level of greyhound racing. We had the pleasure of persuading this doctor of the folly of his request, and subsequently treating members of his family.

The causation of disease, apart from a few infections, is ultimately a matter of individual predisposition, and no two persons react in the same way, as all experience shows us. Two men sit in a draught and each reacts differently. *Jedermann ist tuberkulös*, say the Germans, and admittedly the tubercle bacillus is almost ubiquitous. Why do some of its hosts develop tuberculosis and others not? Why does Löffler's bacillus cause diphtheria in A and not in B? Why does Jones get typhoid fever while Smith is a healthy carrier? *Ignoramus* admittedly; and we are disposed to add: *Ignorabimus*. These individual predispositions are ultimate facts of nature, and we must accept them as we accept the properties of matter as data to our studies, not as objects of futile inquiry.

The infinite variety of Nature makes ridiculous all efforts to deal with disease by classification. All the world knows that every finger-print is unique, and what is true of the thumb is true of the rest of the body, so that there is not a square inch of one person's skin which exactly resembles a square inch of any other person's. How then shall we expect to advance by grouping diseases together and giving them names? Yet there must be generalisation, as well as particularisation, if we are to have a science. Where shall we look for it? In drug action. People react differently to the conditions of life and to the action of bacteria, but drug action is constant. In its grosser forms this is obvious. There is no man in health to whom some dose of arsenic, varying within comparatively narrow limits, will not be fatal, nor any whom a sufficient dose of sulphate of magnesium will not purge. The employment of drugs to secure their direct physical and chemical results has gone on for a long time. It has produced those results, but in regard to disease it has been found not to be curative. Hence, no doubt, the abandonment of medicine which forms the subject of this article. But the conclusion that, because drugs used in this way have failed they must be abandoned; the inference that the power of drugs to influence the human organism exists to no purpose, is one which the mind almost instinctively refuses to accept. We ask: Is there no law of drug action? In previous articles in *THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE*, we have argued that such a law does exist. There is in the living human body a force which attempts to *do the contrary* to the action of any drug administered. This is implicitly recognised in drug administration by conventional medical men, and the endeavour of the administration is to overpower this reacting force of the organism. Hence the necessity

to increase the dose in order to maintain the initial results, and the final arrival, in many cases, at a point at which no dose is adequate. Some power of resistance has been awakened and focussed.

Viewing the matter theoretically, we are led to ask whether there is not here the indication of a new line of approach. Drug treatment has failed on the basis of using it to overpower the resisting force of the body. Its failure is so manifest that it has fallen into general disrepute, and the accessories of medicine tend increasingly to monopolise the field. Now, is it not possible that we may utilise this law of nature—*i.e.* this observed sequence of events: that the body endeavours to do the contrary of drug action—by treating the resistant force as an ally instead of as an enemy? Whether we call it vital force, *vis medicatrix naturae*, defensive mechanism, or what not, the fact remains that the medical faculty has come to recognise, in this force, the only curative agent. Ideas of chemo-therapy, the *ignis fatuus* of an agent that will kill invading germs without injuring the surrounding tissue, may crop up from time to time, but the current of orthodox medical thought is against them. We who say 'Only the life force can cure' are no longer heretics for saying so. The unpardonable heresy is to urge that the most powerful instrument for assisting it to do so is drug action.

A small selection has already been given in the second of the articles already mentioned, from a vast amount of evidence, accumulated in more than forty years' practice, which sets the seal of practical results upon the theoretical position here stated. It has been proved in practice that drugs can and do cure when they are used as allies and not as combatants of the activity which is Life. Investigation of this available evidence, we cannot help thinking, would be more useful than inquiries along lines which have already been found to lead nowhere. One word, however, to clear away a misunderstanding. This is no request for an inquiry by medical men into the reality of the cures obtained by scientific drug treatment. The doctor *has done his work* in diagnosing the disease and confessing his inability to cure it. The patients and the general public are quite competent to decide whether there has been a cure, and the practical object must be to secure that some body representing the public interest will demand an extended education of doctors to enable them to cure what they now find incurable.

We are aware that this position is open to criticism and it is necessary that we should enlarge upon it. Why does the public

call in the aid of the doctors? A study of medical terminology will not supply the answer to this question. The patient does not present himself in the consulting room because he has a deficiency of leucocytes in the blood, because there are *bacilli coli* in the bladder, or because there are heart murmurs. Examination may reveal these things and they sound impressive, but, if the patient had remained in ordinary comfort and had been able to carry on his work and play, he would never have troubled to find them out. If he can be restored to these happy conditions, he will not worry about his white blood count, and the *bacillus coli* can perambulate wherever it pleases as far as he is concerned. But the conventional medical man is unfortunately not content to learn from Nature; he wants to impose conditions. In more than forty years of curative work we have found that in her methods of restoring normal function, as in everything else, Nature is strangely various. She may get rid of the germ, or she may allow it to remain a harmless guest. If a patient, disabled for many years, feels and acts as a normal person and continues to do so for a number of years, we are not interested in the 'pathological findings.' Nor is the public. It wants health, in a workable, common-sense definition of the term. A man or woman may obtain a medical diploma to-day without any evidence of being able to cure anything whatever; one does not need a diploma to say whether an invalid has been turned into a happy and useful citizen. Convinced that these views are those of the great mass of intelligent people, we shall continue to plead for the application of science to medicine in face of the ignominious abdication of 'medical' orthodoxy.

RAPHAEL ROCHE.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is opened first.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 59.

(The Third of the Series.)

'Thou, young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye —— and ye ——, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains.'

1. 'The —— marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling.'
2. 'The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day.'
3. 'Dungeons and palaces are transitory—
High temples fade like ——.'
4. 'We will —— buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim.'
5. 'When on the threshold of the green ——
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him.'
6. 'I spin beneath my pyramid of ——.'

7. 'A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made;
A ———, subtle, wild, yet gentle being.'

Acrostic No. 59 is taken entirely from Shelley's Poetical Works.

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page x of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue.
4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address must also be given, and should be written at the back.
5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
6. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
7. Answers to Acrostic No. 59 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than July 20.

PROEM: Tennyson, *Godiva*, and *Oenone*.

LIGHTS:

1. Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2.
2. R. Browning, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, iii.
3. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 1.
4. Longfellow, *Hiawatha*, xi.
5. Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale*.
6. Hood, *Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg. Her Marriage*.

ANSWER TO No. 58.

1. G	ratian	O
2. O	bes	E
3. D	ago	N
4. I	ago	O
5. V	isio	N
6. A	nkl	E

Acrostic No. 57 ('Drum Note'): Answers were received from 210 solvers, 189 of them being quite correct. The first light (Burns) can be spelled in more than one way; the fourth light was the only one that gave much trouble.

The first correct answer that was opened came from 'Seoul,' who wins the monthly prize. Mr. C. Talbot Bowring, St. Francis, Benfield Way, Portslade, Sussex, will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

n
g
d
n
d
n.
r,
re

e,
of

er

rs,
re

he
le,